FIFTY FIGHTING YEARS

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY 1921-1971

A. LERUMO

FIFTY FIGHTING YEARS

by A. Lerumo.

1971 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of South Africa.

The present volume - based on a series of articles contributed to the Party organ, **The African Communist** - traces the Party's development from early origins as a left-wing within the predominantly white labour movement into a fighting vanguard of national liberation.

The story is prefaced by an introductory chapter outlining three hundred years of European penetration, conquest and domination in South Africa. A number of valuable historic documents are appended to the text.

£ 1.25

Moses M. Kotane, General Secretary
South African Communist Party

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A. Lerumo

The Communist Party of South Africa
1921-1971

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FOREWORD

Marxist-Leninist Parties have a sound tradition of taking their own history seriously. The assessment of past achievements, as well as of errors and misjudgments, is a duty of each Party, helping in its own work and adding to the experience of the international working class movement. The fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of South Africa was an occasion when the Party leadership had intended to carry out such a review.

Unfortunately the conditions under which the Party has to work at present precluded the fulfilment of this task. Fascist terror and illegality have taken a heavy toll of casualties among our leaders and members; most of those remaining are deeply involved in the preparations of our united national liberation movement for armed revolutionary struggle. Inadequate personnel, the difficulties of research and of organising detailed collective discussion were among the serious problems which could not be overcome in time.

The present volume is based on a series of articles published in the Party's quarterly journal, *The African Communist*, with a general historical introduction needed for a proper understanding of our country's present-day problems.

The author wishes to place on record his considerable indebtedness to those comrades who helped in research and discussion, as well as to the detailed guidance of members of the Party leadership. But it should be emphasised that this is in no sense an official chronicle setting forth the 'last word' of the Party on the events and problems described. While care has been taken to consult wherever possible, the writer accepts responsibility for the assessments and emphases, the selection and omissions of detail, of names and events, inevitable in any historical work.

No one can write adequately about the themes presented here without drawing upon such works as Eddie Roux's *Time Longer than Rope*, Lionel Forman's *Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom*, R. K. Cope's *Comrade Bill*, and H. J. and R. E. Simons's *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, the last-named in particular being a monumental tribute to the industry of its authors and a rich storehouse of information.

The incorrect assumptions made by the pioneer Communists of South Africa led them into some indefensible positions, particularly when as leaders of the white labour movement they felt themselves obliged to defend on 'Marxist' grounds the maintenance of the colour bar in industry. It is all too easy, standing on the high vantage-point of retrospect, to upbraid them, saying they 'should have' done this, or 'should not have' done that. This unhistorical approach, however, is not only unjust to men who fulfilled a notable task and are not able to reply; it also fails to see that those men were bound by the inevitable limitations of their time, their background and the pressures that moulded them. It fails to educate because it does not explain in its historical context what those pressures and limitations were, and how, with deeper experience and knowledge, the movement they founded developed to transcend, correct and overcome them.

The truly remarkable thing about the founders of the Party is not that, being what they were, they made errors. It is that despite their limitations they founded a great and enduring Party which was able to withstand every trial and misfortune, to rise above all misconceptions, and with the aid of experience and Marxist-Leninist science to become a true vanguard of the workers in the fight for the liberation of South Africa.

It is very much to be hoped that the widespread interest aroused by the fiftieth anniversary will stimulate the further research and profound discussion needed to produce a substantial and collective review of the rich, rewarding and still continuing history of the South African Communist Party. To the making of this history, the underground cadres inside and the unwilling exiles outside our country, and the courageous revolutionaries of Umkhonto we Sizwe, are today contributing fresh and glorious chapters.

To them, to the memory of the martyrs and pioneers, to the thousands of fighters for freedom imprisoned and under other forms of restriction, this work is dedicated.

A. LERUMO

London, July 1971

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IT is perhaps difficult for White South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against Communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept Communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against oppression is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage. What is more, for many decades Communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals; who were prepared to eat with us, talk with us, live with us and work with us. They were the only political group which was prepared to work with the Africans for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with Communism. They are supported in this belief by a legislature which brands all exponents of democratic government and African freedom as Communists and bans many of them (who are Communists) under the Suppression of Communism Act.

NELSON MANDELA

(Speech at the Rivonia Trial, June 1964)

South Africa approximate distribution of African population groups.

1

CONQUEST AND DISPOSSESSION

The White ruling classes, and especially the leaders of the Nationalist Party have manufactured a version of the past and present of this country which they systematically attempt to impose everywhere, from the schoolroom to international opinion. According to this picture the early White settlers penetrated peacefully into a virtually unoccupied country. The African population, who are depicted as savage barbarians without culture, achievements or history, are represented as relative newcomers who entered the country at about the same time as the Whites, and conducted aggressive wars and raids against them. The impression is given that African occupation was always more or less confined to the present Reserves – the 'Bantu Homelands'. This version of South Africa's past is entirely false.

The Road to South African Freedom
(1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party)

There is hardly a region of Africa whose people have not suffered the ravages of Western European colonialism. None have been oppressed for a longer period or with greater thoroughness than the indigenous peoples of the south: the present day Republic of South Africa.

Beginning more than three hundred years ago, with the establishment by the Dutch East India Company, at the Cape of Good Hope, of a refreshment station for its ships trafficking to Asia, the people of this area have experienced wave after wave of incursions, amounting to a continuous war of aggression, conquest, dispossession and exploitation. Beginning with penetration and enslavement of some Southern areas by Dutch settlers in the pursuit of land and labour, they have experienced domination by the British bourgeoisie in its earlier trading phase and its modern phase of monopoly capitalism. They are at present suffering the terrorist dictatorship of a local white imperialism and national oppression on a scale virtually unparalleled in the modern world.

Some knowledge of this story is essential to the understanding of South Africa's present problems; the more so since South African history has been grotesquely distorted by the upholders of white supremacy. Their myths are conclusively refuted by historical and archaeological research, which demonstrate that South Africa belonged to the ancestors of the present African population, who inhabited every region of it for centuries before white men set foot on its soil.*

Early African Societies

Most of the country belonged to peoples of the language-group which linguists have termed 'Bantu'** The Northern area (now the Transvaal and Orange Free State Provinces and the states of Botswana and Lesotho) was populated by kindred peoples of the Tswana-Sotho-Pedi language group, as well as tribes of the Tsonga and Venda groups. In the East and the South (Natal, East and Central Cape, and Swaziland) lived people of the Nguni (mainly Zulu and Xhosa) group.

Other groups of indigenous Africans lived mainly in the South-Western region of the country: the Khoikhoi and the San peoples. They were the first to come into close contact with the white settlers, who dubbed them 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen' respectively. The Khoikhoi were pastoralists, the San, hunters, both living in self-contained tribal communities.

Also in tribal communities with a natural, non-exchange economy, were the peoples of the 'Bantu' group; but they had developed far more

*See, among other works, the pioneering article by M. A. Jaspan, 'Civilisation in Southern Africa before European Conquest' *(Liberation,* Johannesburg No. 14, November 1955); *The Oxford History of South Africa* Vol. 1 (ed. Leonard Thompson and Monica Wilson, London 1969); *African Societies in Southern Africa* (ed. Leonard Thompson, London 1969).

**From the similarity of the word for 'people' (bantu or batho) in their languages. Unfortunately the coinage is acquiring a derogatory connotation through its misuse by the white authorities. The group includes peoples of Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and further to the North.

complex economic and political institutions. Their life was based on the soil, which was held in common. They bred cattle, sheep and other domestic animals, cultivated sorghum and other crops. But the economy was variegated and developing. They mined and wrought iron, copper, tin, gold and other minerals; manufactured pottery and hide products. Archaeological research, though grossly neglected, shows many traces of ancient stone dwellings and fortified towns and elaborate systems of irrigation and defence. With these developments a process of class-differentiation had begun, especially at Zimbabwe, with the mines coming under the control of chiefs and other substantial cattle-owners. But since the main means of production, the land, was held in common, differences in wealth and status had not led to acute class divisions.

Some division of labour had developed. Specialised workers such as miners and smiths were paid in kind. Sometimes entire tribes specialised in metalwork, exchanging implements for cattle. But the prevailing character of the economy was subsistence, not the production of commodities for exchange.

The African political and judicial structure was essentially democratic. Important decisions affecting the tribe were referrred to a general assembly of the people — the Tswana and Sotho *Pitso*, the Xhosa and Zulu *Imbizo*.

> 'The chief's court, at which disputes were tried publicly, and every man had the right to attend and speak, was the pivot of the legal and political structure . . . An Nguni chief was traditionally below the law and could be tried and fined by his own privy council'.

writes Professor Monica Wilson (*The Oxford History of South Africa* Vol. I, p.122) and similarly:

> 'The Tswana, like the Nguni, were characterised by a great development of law and respect for the courts. The Kgotta (council or court of law) was the centre . . . of every capital . . . . The chief was beneath the law and could be tried by his own counsellors. None of the Sotho chiefdoms was a military kingdom in which authority was maintained by force . . .' (*Ibid*, p. 158).

Artefacts dating from as early as the twelfth century testify to the existence of ancient trading contacts with Eastern countries; the African communities exchanging local products for ceramics, glassware and woven fabrics from China, India and the Arab lands. These early exchanges helped to enrich the African societies and stimulate their natural development, in contrast with the later depradations of capitalism which destroyed their very fabric.

The forms of primitive communism existing in Africa before European conquest embodied cultures, values and traditions in many ways far superior to those of the representatives of capitalism who invaded and destroyed them, and regarded them with such contempt and utter lack of understanding. Yet, viewed in the light of Marxist

historical materialism, these were backward societies passing through a phase of social development experienced at one time or another by all human communities. Their implements and methods of production had not advanced, in a historic sense, to a level which would enable their communities to withstand invasion by capitalist states. The early societies of Southern Africa were defeated not only by the superior weapons of the invaders, but also by their own backwardness and disunity.

The Dutch Settlement

The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Nederlandsche Ge-Octroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie) was virtually a state within a state, combining the wealthiest merchant bourgeoisie of Holland and controlling a vast empire, whose capital was at Batavia in Java, but which extended to governorates in various parts of Indonesia, Ceylon and elsewhere.

The Dutch attempted to capture Mozambique from Portugal in 1609-10; failing in this object they sought elsewhere for a stopping place for their ships where they could rest and replenish their stocks of meat, vegetables and fresh water on their long voyage.

It was with that purpose alone that the Company set up their refreshment station at the Cape in 1652. Some idea of the scope of the project is that the original expedition was confined to about 90 men and that it was placed under the direction of a man who had previously been dismissed from the Company's service for corruption – one Jan van Riebeeck. In 1657 the Company, wary of van Riebeeck's expansionist tendencies, warned him that 'not too much work should be taken in hand . . . the Cape establishment should be kept as confined and small as possible.'

The Dutch East India Company, that brutal coloniser, had no scruples about robbery and enslavement: their bloody record in Indonesia testifies to that. But they did not consider the Cape as a potentially profitable colony. They did not want to start a costly war with the Khoikhoi, and preferred to obtain cattle by barter rather than by crude seizure.

They criticised van Riebeeck for entering into 'friendly' relations with the Khoikhoi. His reply affords a true insight into the mind of the man who is revered as the 'father' of the Republic of South Africa and whose portrait appears on every banknote and coin it issues:

> 'This we did to make them less shy, so as to find hereafter a better opportunity to seize them – 1100 or 1200 in number and about 600 cattle, the best in the whole country. We have everyday the finest opportunities for effecting this without bloodshed, and could derive good service from the people, in chains, in killing seals, or in labouring in the silver mines which we trust will be found here.'

In a further letter van Riebeeck complained about Company

regulations limiting the seizure of cattle and slaves: '. . . it is therefore very vexing to see such fine herds of cattle . . . although, were it permitted, we had this day opportunity enough to take from them 10,000 head . . . and we might make prisoners, without a blow, of many savages, in order to send them as slaves to India, as they constantly come to us without weapons'.

The Directors of the Company seriously contemplated digging a canal from False Bay to Table Bay, to make the Cape peninsula into an island, and van Riebeeck 'in fact planted a hedge enclosing an area of about 6,000 acres which was considered the right size for the settlement'.*

The Company's original intention, then, was by no means to establish a Dutch colony at Cape Town. The Company grew its own fruit and vegetables, and bartered fruit and vegetables from the Khoikhoi. But the soldiers maintained at the Cape (to guard the station from the British and other rivals) proved unwilling and inefficient market-gardeners. In an attempt to encourage private cultivation by settlers on a commercial basis the Company tried at first to recruit Chinese and Indonesian immigrants. Their efforts were unsuccessful. Gradually the Directors turned to a policy of encouraging and subsidising Dutch settlers on Khoikhoi lands, as 'boers' (i.e. farmers). Naturally, the Africans resisted the encroachment, setting off the long train of aggressive wars conducted by Europeans in Southern Africa.

The original process was a slow one. By the end of the 1680's the white population at the Cape (other than Company employees temporarily stationed there) was less than 300, but during the next ten years the population doubled through an influx of Huguenot refugees from religious persecution in France – who were rapdily assimilated by the enforced suppression of their language.

In encouraging white immigration the prime motive was the raising of a militia to defend the Cape against Holland's trading rivals. The settlers were not inclined to manual labour as farmhands or artisans: this work was considered suitable only for slaves on the lines common throughout the Dutch Empire. By 1711 'the burgher (white) population of 1,756 souls owned 1,781 slaves'.** Most of these were Africans from East Africa, others came from Indonesia and elsewhere in Asia. By 1778 'the census indicated 11,107 burgher-owned slaves, but these figures are certainly understatements'.*** Thus there was more than one slave per head of the white population. Slavery was a characteristic feature of white society in the Cape, creating a pattern for its attitudes well into the nineteenth century. Since most of the slaves were dark-skinned people, whether from Asia, East Africa, or

*M. F. Katzen, *Oxford History*, Vol I. p. 190.
**M. F. Katzen, *op. cit.* p. 204.
***Ibid* p. 205.

indigenous Khoikhoi, a barrier was created on the basis of skin colour, becoming ever more rigid with the passing generations.

The Company gradually dropped its earlier policy of opposition to the expansion of the white stockbreeders into the interior, mainly for economic reasons. 'The spreading out of the inhabitants with their cattle is the principal reason that meat can be delivered so cheaply to the Company . . .' declared a government paper of 21 January 1730. Greed for fresh pastures lured the stockbreeders (*'trekboers'* i.e. nomadic farmers) ever further away from Cape Town.

The Cape government periodically set boundaries beyond which settlement was illegal. This was partly to prevent conflict with indigenous peoples whose land was being invaded; partly to ensure revenue from grazing licences. Nevertheless these limits were continuously extended Eastward from the Cape peninsula — to Stellenbosch (1682), to Worcester and the Great Brak River (1743), the Gamtoos (1770), the Fish River (1780); North East from Bruintjes Hoogte (1774) and Colesberg (1778).

Further expansion was checked only by the furious resistance of the African tribes.

In the North-East a state of continuous guerilla warfare between the invaders and the San people raged throughout the eighteenth century.

> 'Further north east expansion was halted by increasingly ferocious warfare between trekboers and San hunters. After 1715 trekboers went further into 'Bushman Country'. By 1770 the conflict was so intense that trekboer Commandos systematically exterminated the San, while San raids forced trekboers to abandon farms in the Nieuweveld and Sneeuberg regions and endangered trekboer occupation in the Tarka region, in the 1780's.*

The Epic of Xhosa Resistance

At the same time, on the 'Eastern Frontier', the boers came upon far more formidable opponents to their land-and-cattle robbery than they had hitherto encountered: the various Xhosa tribes inhabiting the Eastern Cape, whom they referred to as 'Kaffirs'. Unlike the San they were primarily cattle breeders and agriculturists, whose abundant herds and fertile land attracted the envy of the trekboers. But they had a military tradition and knew how to defend themselves and fight back. Intermittent war raged between the Xhosa and the marauders for more than a century. The attitude of the boers was described by the poet and journalist Thomas Pringle:**

> 'Kaffirs who resisted were shot; their kraals burnt down and their cattle seized. No prisoners were made and the wounded and infirm were left to perish'.

The Xhosa people resisted the seizure of their lands and cattle, but were

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*M. F. Katzen, *Ibid* p.212.
**T. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa,* London 1835.

by no means averse to peaceful contacts and relations with the white settlers. Two hundred years ago elephant abounded in the Eastern Cape, and the Xhosa, as their Chiefs Ndlambe, Cungwa and others told Governor General Janssens in 1803, were anxious to trade ivory, cattle, and even their labour power, in exchange for metal, blankets, horses and firearms. They welcomed missionaries such as van der Kemp, Williams, Brownlee and others, who, despite their treacherous role in the Africans' struggle for independence imparted knowledge of literacy and other useful arts. The Xhosa were for peaceful coexistence. But nothing could restrain the appetite of the whites for Xhosa land and cattle. A series of acts of aggression (dignified by colonial historians as 'the Kaffir wars') continued until 1879.

The real nature of these 'wars' was well summarised by H. Lawson, writing in the revolutionary Johannesburg journal *Liberation:* (No. 20 August 1956).

> Early in 1780 two Commandos made a cattle raid and murdered many defenceless people. In 1781 a Commando took 5,330 cattle in two months. In 1788 a Graff-Reinet official wrote to Cape Town that 'some of the inhabitants here have already for a long time wished to pick a quarrel with this nation (the Xhosas) in order that, were it possible, they might make a good loot, since they are always casting covetous eyes on the cattle the Kaffirs possess'. In 1793 they obtained their object. The first Commando of that year took 1,800 cattle and murdered the owners, another Commando took 2,000 cattle and murdered forty people, while the third and largest Commando under the 'Liberal' Maynier took no fewer than 10,000 cattle and also 180 women and children as prisoners for slave labour.

The Advent of British Imperialism

The Xhosa people laboured under numerous disadvantages in their clashes with the white expansionists. They were not a united people, but divided into many small chieftainships, disputes between whom could be and were taken advantage of by the invaders. Lacking firearms and horses, they fought on foot armed with assegai and shield against mounted gunmen. Yet they resisted and defended their independence and lands for over a hundred years.

The task was made infinitely more difficult after the establishment of British rule in the Cape. By the end of the 17th century Holland was rapidly declining as the major maritime and colonial power. British supremacy, based on the technology of industrial capitalism, was on the ascendent.

In 1806, as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars, the Cape Colony was taken over by British imperialism.

The eighteenth century parties of marauding trekboers were part-time raiders in quest of loot rather than conquest. They relied on levies of Coloured and Khoikhoi conscripts sent in advance to face any fighting, and liable as happened on several occasions, to desert and join

the Xhosa against the common oppressor.

British imperialism was quite a different and more formidable opponent, with its organised battalions of full-time professional soldiers, and its practice of regular warfare to conquer, annex and dominate overseas colonies.

The British having conquered territory, proceeded to expel the inhabitants and divide their land among settlers from the Cape Colony and from Britain itself. In 1820 4,000 British settlers were 'presented' with Xhosa land in the Grahamstown district. In 1835 the British Governor proclaimed a new boundary as far east as the Kei river and in 1857 a number of German veterans of the British Foreign Legion were settled in the region of King Williams Town.

The nineteenth-century history of the Xhosa tribes is one of the piecemeal dispossession of their lands and independence by British imperialism. The process has been succinctly summed up by Professor Wilson. (*Oxford History*, Vol.I, p.252):

> During a hundred years the boundary shifted eastward . . . In 1772 some Xhosa, mingled with Khoikhoi, were living on the Gamtoos; in 1806 the boundary was the Fish (river) . . . in 1811 Ndlambe, with 20,000 followers was pushed across it (The Fish). In 1819 the country between the Fish and the Keiskamma was declared neutral; by 1824 it was partly occupied by whites. In 1847 the boundary shifted to the Kei; in 1858 to the Mbashe (Bashee); in 1878 to the Mthatha; and in 1894 Pondoland, between the Mthatha and Mtamvuna, was annexed.

The Xhosa people under such leaders as Ndlambe, Hintsa and Makana fought back heroically. In December 1818 the white troops, with the aid of some followers of Ngqika crossed the boundary at the Fish River, burning down the people's huts and capturing about 23,000 cattle. But, under the leadership of Makana, the Xhosa forces rallied. They crossed the Fish River, utterly defeating Ngqika's men, and penetrating deep into the Cape Colony where, armed with assegais, they fought a desperate and epic battle, suffering frightful casualties against the British firearms before they were beaten and Makana made a captive on Robben Island.

The usual colonialist 'logic' blamed the long and devastating series of conflicts on the 'eastern frontier' upon the alleged 'frontier violations' and 'cattle stealing' of the African inhabitants. No doubt retaliatory cattle-raids did take place during the hundred years war, but as Professor Wilson justly observes 'The Xhosa were fighting not *primarily* for booty, but for survival as an independent people'. *(Ibid,* p.252)

The Rise of the Zulu Kingdom

The tendency among African tribes in Southern Africa was for a long time one of subdivision into many more or less autonomous chiefdoms. The country is a big one; when the population outgrew the land upon which it was settled it was common for a section of it to hive off –

often under the leadership of a member or section of the Chief's family – and move to new pastures.

Amongst the Nguni people of Natal at the beginning of the 19th century, an opposite tendency appeared – that of unification and consolidation under a highly centralised and organised monarchy. Various reasons have been advanced for this phenomenom: growing pressure of the population on the land, with no further room for expansion, the urge to monopolise foreign trade, especially with Delagoa Bay, and the threat of trekboers from the Cape, forerunners of the 'Great Trek'.

The pioneer nation-builder among the Zulu was Dingiswayo, who came to the head of the Mthethwa tribe at the end of the 18th century. By means of conscripting the young men into age-group regiments he built up a standing army which enabled him to unite the chiefdoms from the Umfolozi river in the north to the Tukela in the South by the time of his death in 1818.

He was succeeded by Shaka (1787-1828) one of the most remarkable military geniuses in history. Shaka discarded the traditional throwing assegai and armed his men with a short stabbing-spear for hand-to-hand fighting. His barefooted soldiers, rigorously trained and disciplined, were schooled in highly organised, planned and original battle-tactics. Shaka greatly expanded the area of Zulu domination. His legendary military conquests, his enormous standing army – estimates of its numbers vary up to 80,000 men – imposed Zulu power throughout modern Natal and beyond.

> The traditions of the Zulu royal lineage became the traditions of the nation; the Zulu dialect became the dialect of the nation and every inhabitant, whatever his origins, became a Zulu.*

The tribes in neighbouring areas did not always submit to Zulu conquest. Some, like Sobhuza to the north, resisted successfully, built up an army on Zulu lines and laid the foundations of modern Swaziland. Others fled northwards with their peoples, establishing new kingdoms as far north as the Transvaal and, beyond the Limpopo, in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

These great population movements of masses of armed men had far-reaching repercussions. A period of conflict ravaged the interior of the country, disorganising its settled population and impoverishing many; a factor which greatly facilitated the penetration of the white voortrekker invasion (the Great Trek) which took place from the Cape Colony into Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal from 1836 to 1854.

The first whites with whom Shaka came into contact were a group of British adventurers who settled in Tekwini (which they called Port Natal and subsequently Durban) from 1822, mainly to trade in ivory.

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*Leonard Thompson, *Oxford History*, Vol I, p. 345.

Shaka welcomed them in a friendly way, regarded them as his subjects and even called them up to fight in his campaign of 1827. The following year he was killed in a fight for the succession; it was not he but his successor Dingane who had to meet the brunt of Boer and British aggression in Natal. By 1835 there were only about 30 whites at Durban, and despite occasional friction (mainly because they harboured African fugitives) they coexisted more or less peacefully with the Zulu. But Dingane had been warned what to expect. An African named Jacob (by the Europeans) who had visited the Cape Colony told him:

> that at first the white people came and took a part of their (the Xhosa) land, then they encroached and drove them back, and have repeatedly taken more land as well as cattle. They then built houses among them for the purpose of subduing them . . . he had heard that a few white people had intended to come first and get a grant of land; they would then build a fort, when more would come and demand land who would also build houses and subdue the Zulus, and keep driving them back as they had driven the Frontier tribes.
>
> (Thompson, *op. cit.* p. 353.)

Professor Thompson cites this passage from the contemporary record of H. F. Fynn as evidence that Jacob was 'bitterly anti-white', but events were soon to justify his warnings.

By the end of 1837 thousands of trekboers from the Cape Colony had begun the invasion of Natal, pouring through the Drakensberg passes with their waggons, horses and firearms, their families and Coloured servants.

The Great Trek (1836-1854)

The northern and eastern expansion of the Boer farmers, prior to 1836, was a largely economically-motivated and spontaneous process. Ever in search of fresh grazing lands and loot, the trekboers had steadily pushed the area of white settlement outwards from Cape Town. As they moved, the frontiers of the Cape Colony, whether under Dutch or British rule, were extended to incorporate new African territories.

Quite different in character and magnitude was the mass migration of 1836-1854, in the first ten years of which over 14,000 Boers crossed the Orange River. The 'Great Trek' consisted of a series of planned expeditions of farmers accompanied by their families, servants and all their possessions. Their wagons were laden with gunpowder. Their 'treks' were of the nature of military expeditions to conquer, dominate and occupy African lands. They did not seek to extend the frontiers of the Cape Colony; rather their purpose was to escape British rule and establish a 'free and independent state' beyond the borders of the Colony.

Following British occupation of the Cape Colony a number of areas of antagonism had developed between the imperial government and the white settlers, who, predominantly Dutch-speaking farmers, resented

the imposition of the English language, of British officialdom, and particularly of the concepts of bourgeois-democratic liberalism in relation to slavery and 'the colour question'.

It is characteristic of rising capitalism that it seeks to replace all previously-existing forms of exploitation, such as slavery and feudalism, and replace them with the single form of the exploitation of wage-labour. The British bourgeoisie, like their counterparts in the United States and elsewhere opposed slavery not out of humanitarian sentiment – though of course men of humanitarian views did fight slavery – but because it stood in the way of the full development of capitalist relations of production, based on an unlimited supply of workers 'free' to sell their labour-power.

Hence, not without a lengthy struggle, the resistance of the slave-trading interests was overcome. Slavery was legally abolished throughout the British Empire in 1833, and a number of consequent measures applied to the Cape Colony.

These British reforms did not immediately or fundamentally alter the real position of the masses in the Cape. A veiled system of slavery – 'apprenticeship' – continued. The master-and-servant Ordinance of 1856 increased the authority of the white masters over their Coloured and Khoikhoi servants. The 'Kaffir Employment Act' of 1857 laid the basis for the diabolical Pass Laws, one of the foundations of anti-African discrimination.

Nevertheless the abolition of slavery and the trend it represented were opposed and resisted by the Boers, whose way of life and thought rested upon the arrogant assumptions of white superiority born of generations of chattel slavery and national oppression at the Cape.

It was such resentments, no less than their own desire for national independence, which underlay the exodus of many Dutch families from the Colony.

The Great Trek is depicted by both Afrikaner and British historians as an act of rebellion against British rule. Boer risings had taken place before, in 1795, 1799 and 1815, in each case unsuccessfully. In the words of Professor Thompson, in 1836 they launched 'another form of rebellion – escape to a new terrain.'* The Afrikaner historian, Professor C. J. M. Muller describes the Great Trek as 'a rebellion against the British government.'**

Such legalistic assessments leave out of account the principal character of the 'Trek' as a war of aggression. Far from being the relatively peaceful occupation of empty territory described by their present-day descendants and propagandists, the intrusion of the Boers into the interior was an armed invasion of lands belonging to peoples

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**Oxford History*, Vol. I, p. 406.
***Waarom die Groot Trek Geslaag het.* (Why the Great Trek succeeded) Communications of the University of South Africa, B. 12, p. 4.

whose ancestors had inhabited them from time immemorial.

Had the British seriously wanted to do so, they could without much difficulty have suppressed this 'rebellion' and prevented the northward movement of the trekkers. In fact they connived at it.

Despite their areas of conflict with British imperialism, the Boers constantly enjoyed in their African wars the favour of the greatest military and industrial power in the world. The trekkers were, from first to last, dependent on commerce with the Cape Colony and Europe for the commodities they needed and above all for the firearms and gunpowder which enabled them to maintain their presence.

The British authorities were perfectly aware of the activities and intentions of these 'rebels'; indeed they made no secret of them. Yet (in a manner which irresistably recalls the reaction of British imperialism to the Smith 'rebellion' in Rhodesia from 1965 onwards) they took no steps at all to prevent them.

> 'The British Colonial officials could have seriously impeded the Great Trek in its early stages if they had chosen to do so. It was unlawful for British subjects to leave the Cape Colony without permission, to take apprentices with them against their will, or to remove large quantities of gunpowder without licence. Since nearly all the Voortrekkers crossed the Orange River with their weapons by one of six or seven drifts . . . it would have been a comparatively simple matter to man the drifts and stem the exodus. This was not done . . .'*

Thus in their advance into the interior the trekkers were aided by the covert support of British imperialism, ensuring their superiority in arms. They were also helped by the disunity among the Africans, which enabled them time and again to enrol the assistance of one tribe to fight another; and by the African system and concept of communal land tenure. Often they sought and were granted the *use* of land by one or other African chief, to whom it was inconceivable that he was thereby ceding a title to permanent ownership by his 'guests' who could then dispose of it as they wished, deprive him or its people of its use, or compel them to work for the white farmers to pay 'rent'.

African Resistance

Yet the trekkers had no easy path. Wherever they went they met stubborn and heroic resistance from African peoples. Their occupation of Natal and later the Orange Free State and the Transvaal was continuously marked by armed resistance, which at no time did they ever succeed in fully overcoming and quelling.

In Natal their encounter with the Zulu under Dingane has been a favourite subject of Afrikaner folk lore. The Voortrekkers, under Retief, the senior Trekker leader, arrived in great force over the

*Thompson, *op. cit.* p. 411.

Drakensberg passes. According to their version they got Dingane to put his mark (he could not read or write) to a document 'giving' Retief 'and his countrymen . . . the place called Port Natal (modern Durban) together with all the land . . . from the Tukela to the Mzimbuvu Rivers westward and from the sea to the North as far as the land may be useful and in my possession'.

It is incredible that Dingane could seriously have contemplated agreeing to these demands. Certainly he was not anxious to enter into armed conflict with whites, whose fire power he respected. But it is manifestly absurb that the head of the proud Zulu nation could ever have contemplated voluntarily submitting his land and people to alien subjection by the Boers. Dingane's army was unconquered and victorious; his authority was supreme over most of modern Natal and as far north as Delegoa Bay (modern Lourenzo Marques).

Retief had asked Dingane for a grant of land in October 1837. Without waiting for his permission large parties had then settled in the areas of Northern Natal which they had asked for; they had refused to hand over his cattle, horses and guns which they had recovered from the Tlokwa chief Sekonyela; they had threatened him with the fate of the Ndebela chief Mzilikaze whom they had driven from the Transvaal across the Limpopo River.

Dingane struck back. He knew of the fate of the Xhosa and was ready to defend his land and his people. When Retief came to his headquarters at Mgungundlovu in February 1838 with a hundred troops, to demand the surrender of Dingane they were arrested and executed. Prolonged warfare followed between the Zulu forces on the one hand and the Boers in the north and the British at Durban, on the other. Zulu impis suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Ncome ('Blood River') and elsewhere, but it was not until a major split took place within the Zulu nation that Dingane's power was broken. His brother Mpande broke away with 17,000 followers to join the Boers. In January 1840 Mpande's forces, 10,000 strong, together with a commando of 300 Boers and 460 Coloured and African troops overcame Dingane's army.

The Boers named Mpande King of the Zulu, subject to their shortlived Natal Republic (1838-1843) but they never succeeded in conquering the fighting spirit of the Zulu people, who were to continue their fight for freedom for many years and against far more formidable opponents.

In 1843 Great Britain annexed Natal. The Natal 'Republic' submitted without a fight to the British terms although these included a ban on slavery and another against legal discrimination on grounds 'of colour, origin, race or creed'. The latter provision was to remain illusory for the whole period of Natal as a British Colony, its system being even more illiberal than that of the Cape. Nevertheless the Boer trekkers packed up their wagons and departed again into the interior. By the end

of 1847 nearly all of them had left Natal. Their place was taken by a flood of subsidised British immigrants of whom 5,000 arrived between 1849 and 1851.*

It is often asserted and fondly believed that the British settlers in South Africa and Rhodesia were and are less anti-African than Afrikaners and others. This proposition cannot survive serious examination of the record.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone, son of an '1820 settler' from Bristol, dominated African administration in Natal for its formative thirty years, first as 'Diplomatic Agent' and then as Secretary for Native Affairs (1853-1875). He must be regarded as virtually the father of modern apartheid. His policy, which later became the pattern for the 'native policy' of the entire country, included the herding of Africans into 'locations' and the use of traditional tribal authorities as instruments of colonial policy (with himself as 'paramount chief') long before the Nationalist Party, Dr. Verwoerd, and 'self-governing Bantu Homelands' were ever heard of.

Some idea of the attitude of the white settlers in Natal may be gleaned from a memorandum they submitted in 1854, in which they condemned the 'reckless extravagance' with which the British government had allocated 2 million acres to the Africans (estimated at 250,000) and 'only' 5 million acres to whites (about 18,000). This report, (C.O. 879/1, PRO) recommending the reduction of African land by about three-quarters, split up into small locations and under rigid control, was submitted to London by the Lieutenant-Governor, B. Pine, with the recommendation that it was 'a most able official document.'

For the Zulu people, British rule meant the alienation of most of their traditional land and the imposition of a 'hut tax' yielding over £5,000 a year. Since the death of Mpande in 1872 there had been a revival of national spirit and resistance under the leadership of his son Cetshwayo.

At the beginning of 1879 Britain began a war to break the spirit and independence of the Zulu nation. Three columns commanded by Lord Chelmsford invaded Zululand. Within two weeks it was to undergo one of the most crushing defeats ever suffered by British forces anywhere, at the battle of Isandhlawanda on 22 January. With their assegais and spears the Zulu impis launched an attack on a fortified camp of 1,800 British troops. Within a few hours only 400 British survived. Of this battle, Frederich Engels commented that the Zulu

> 'did what no European army can do. Armed only with pikes and spears, and without firearms, they advanced under a hail of bullets from breach loaders, right up to the bayonets – acknowledged as the best in the world for fighting in close formation – throwing them

*Alan F. Hattersley, *The British Settlement of Natal: A Study in Imperial Migration* (Cambridge, 1950).

back in disorder and beating them back more than once; and this despite the colossal disparity in arms'.*

This defeat aroused a tremendous storm in the British parliament. The upshot was a Cabinet decision: 'to restore British prestige, the Zulu nation was to be defeated'.

It cost many years of bitter fighting and the blood of thousands of brave men to implement that decision. In 1887 Zululand was annexed by the British, but it was not until 1906 with the crushing of the rebellion under the leadership of Bambata, that the last flames of traditional Zulu military resistance were extinguished. From then on the Zulu were to continue the struggle in new forms, as part of the emergent African nation and the united front of South African liberation. A similar story can be told of heroic African resistance in most parts of the country to the Boer and British interlopers.

Despite the period of turbulence and chaos (the 'Difaqane') that followed the establishment of the Zulu kingdom, which affected African societies far within modern Lesotho, the O.F.S., Transvaal and beyond, new and larger units had grown up and an era of regeneration had begun. The Trekkers encountered strong and effective opposition. An early expedition under van Rensburg was wiped out by the Tsonga of the north-east Transvaal in 1836.

A large party of Nguni people headed by Mzilikazi – they came to be known as the Ndebele – had broken away from Shaka and succeeded in establishing a stable kingdom in the Transvaal and Orange Free State highveld. In 1836 they put up a stand against Potgieter's band of Voortrekkers. Although Mzilikazi had always welcomed friendly white visitors, he recognised the Boer intruders as a mortal threat. In October 1836 a major clash took place at the Battle of Vegkop, when the Boers were defeated and had to call upon the pro-Boer chief Moroka of the Barolong, who helped them escape to his place at Thaba Nchu. By the following year, joined by reinforcements from the Cape, the Voortrekkers hit back. In November 1837 after a nine-days battle at his headquarters at Kapain in the Transvaal, Mzilikazi retreated with his followers across the Limpopo, where they established a new 'Matabeleland.'**

Across the Orange River

Crossing the banks of the Orange River the Boers found their way barred by the Griqua and Sotho people, particularly by that formidable opponent Moshweshwe I, founder of Lesotho, and one of the most

*F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State.* (Selected Works, Vol. II p. 254).

**Fiftv years later, under Mzilikazi's son Lobengula, the Ndebele lost their independence to the mercenaries of Cecil Rhodes and his British South Africa Company.

astute generals and statesmen of his day, who repeatedly – but unsuccessfully – attempted to build a united front of African resistance.

There were two Griqua states recognised as such by treaties signed by Britain with their leaders, Andries Waterboer and Adam Kok. Made up of Coloured people, mainly of Khoikhoi descent, they had left the Cape Colony to escape the degrading colour bar and set up free and independent states. Waterboer's Griqualand West was situated in the region of modern Kimberley. Kok and his people were settled north of the Orange River, with their capital at Phillipolis.

Moshweshwe likewise had a treaty with the British, signed by Governor Napier in 1843, recognising the boundaries of Lesotho as 'all the land between the Orange and the Caledon Rivers plus a belt about 25 to 30 miles north of the Caledon'.

All these treaties were shamefully betrayed when it suited British imperialists interests to do so. The Afrikaner settlers occupied Griqua lands and a number of disputes flared up into open warfare in 1845. The British intervened in favour of the Afrikaners. In 1854 – following a brief period in which Britain formally annexed the 'Orange River Sovereignty' (the present O.F.S. province) – the British signed the 'Bloemfontein Convention' conferring independence on the Boers and virtually abandoning the Griquas.*

Under the rule of Moshweshwe, and the protection of his impregnable fortress of Thabu Bosiu, the Kingdom of Lesotho was developing into one of the most powerful and stable nations in Southern Africa, inflicting a number of historic defeats on both Boer and British forces.

The British abrogated their treaty of 1843 recognising the frontiers of Lesotho and in 1849 laid down the 'Warden Line' in which a large area of the country was 'presented' to the Boers.

However 'Warden found that it was one thing to draw a line on a map; another to enforce it' (Thompson, *op. cit.* p. 419). Continued conflicts broke out between Mosheshwe's people, in alliance with the Taung under Moletsane, and the Afrikaners acting in concert with Moroka and others. Warden 'abandoned all pretence at impartiality and, mustering a composite force of whites, Africans and Coloured people, he attacked Moletsane's villages on Viervoet mountain; but Moshweshwe's Sotho came to the aid of their allies and inflicted a crushing defeat on Warden (30th June, 1851)'. (*ibid.*).

The British, under the new Governor. Cathcart, decided to avenge

*By 1861, finding independence impossible under Boer rule, Adam Kok III abandoned the Orange Free State and trekked with his entire people through Lesotho and over the Drakensberg, to found the new Republic of Griqualand East at Kokstad. But by the end of the 1870's the rich land attracted the greed of white farmers and the territory was annexed to the Cape Colony. Thus ended the last independent Coloured State in South Africa.

this defeat and restore the prestige of British arms. A British force of 2,000 infantry and 500 cavalry crossed the Caledon to teach the Basotho 'a lesson'. But they were ambushed by Sotho horsemen and infantry and forced to retreat in disorder after a severe mauling.

During the incessant aggressive wars which the Orange Free State conducted against Lesotho from 1865 to 1868, Moshweshwe's people were crippled by the ban on the sale of weapons which the Boers could freely obtain from the Cape and Natal. British imperialism, in the Sand River Convention of 1852, recognised the independence of the Transvaal and agreed 'that no objection shall be made by the emigrant Boers purchasing their supplies of ammunition in any of the British colonies . . . it being mutually understood that all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited'. The Boers never succeeded in conquering Lesotho or destroying its independence. But their superiority in weapons, and their constant raids into the country, seizing great herds of cattle, ravaging crops and wrecking villages, wrought havoc upon the Basotho. Moshweshwe, who had for so long and so skillfully maintained his kingdom in the precarious area between British and Afrikaner threats to its independence, was compelled to accept a British-dictated settlement as the price of 'protection' by the Queen's government. The terms were harsh indeed. A meeting between British and Free State representatives in Aliwal North (1869) – from which the Basotho were excluded – agreed to deprive Lesotho of all its territory west of the Caledon river, and expelled Moshweshwe's ally, Moletsane, and his Tuang people from their traditional lands.

A Basotho deputation to London succeeded in delaying the implementation of the Aliwal North *diktat* until the year of Moshweshwe's death (March 1870). One far-reaching concession was won – no land in Lesotho could be sold or alienated to any white settler.

But in essence, under the hammer-blows of the unholy alliance of British and Boer colonialism, the independence of Lesotho was not to be regained even formally, for a hundred years.*

Resistance in the Transvaal

The Afrikaners who had crossed the Vaal River, forming various Republics (they were not amalgamated into the South African Republic until 1860) strove continually and often vainly to subdue the African societies whose lands they had entered. This was attempted sometimes by trickery – the signing of various 'treaties' which they afterwards claimed as 'title deeds', as had been tried with Dingane – more often by violence. The Africans stood up to the invaders. During nearly all of their existence the Transvaal Republics were engaged in wars against various tribes.

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*Lesotho gained formal independence from Britain on 4 October 1966.

In the eastern Transvaal the Pedi chiefdom of Sekwati and his successor Sekhukhuni held its own for many years in their mountain fastnesses. In 1852, after beating off a sustained Voortrekker attack Sekwati signed an agreement with the Lydenburg Republic recognising the Steelpoort River as the eastern boundary of his kingdom. Sekhukhuni continued his policy of consolidation. He welcomed refugees and also German missionaries of the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society. But in 1866 he expelled these after bluntly telling their leader Merensky 'You are spies of the Boers'.

In the north the Venda chiefs defeated the Afrikaners in 1867, compelling them to retreat from the Soutpansberg.

In the west a number of Tswana chiefdoms held up the advance of the Boer land-robbers: the Kwena under Chief Sechele at Dimawe and Kolobeng; the Ngwaketse under Chief Gaseitsiwe at Kanye; the Ngwato in the north led by Chiefs Sekgoma and Macheng in the Shoshong region.

In 1852 the Boers made a determined effort to subject the Tswana people around the Marico district. Their Commandant called the chiefs to a meeting and told them they had to pay taxes and supply labour to the white farmers. Sechele, who had boycotted the meeting, became the focus of resistance; and a Boer Commando came to his place at Dimawe demanding that he hand over Chief Mosiele of the Mmanaane-Kgatla who had taken refuge with him. Sechele refused, whereupon the Commando attacked Kwena and Ngwaketse towns, sacked the residence of Sechele's missionary David Livingstone (then on a visit to the Cape) ravaged the crops and seized over 200 women and children as slaves. Nevertheless the Kwena and Ngwaketse, like their northern neighbours, the Ngwato, preserved their independence for many years, until like Lesotho they were absorbed by the British Empire as 'Bechuanaland Protectorate' (now Botswana).

The laws relating to Africans in the Boer Republics were, as might be expected, intolerably harsh and degrading. The watchword 'no equality in Church or state' was written into the Transvaal Grondwet (constitution). Only white persons enjoyed the franchise or any other citizen rights. Africans were not allowed to have firearms, ammunition or horses, or to move without a pass. Apart from the four African families allotted to each white farmer to do the farm work, the chief of each location had to pay taxes and to conscript labour for the whites. Africans thus impressed had to work for up to a year for a farmer — 'wage': one heifer for one year's work — or serve as 'auxiliaries' in the Boer Commandos' anti-African wars.

This form of near-slavery was supplemented by a system of 'apprenticeship' whereby African children 'captured in warfare' could be held by Boer farmers to work without pay, up to the age of twenty-five. This thinly disguised form of slavery was legally sanctioned, with the proviso — a sop to British and international

opinion – the the 'apprentice' could not be sold to another master.

The only reason why these laws were not thoroughly and systematically implemented was that the Republics lacked the means to enforce and administer them in the face of ever-alive African resistance. The white population of the Transvaal numbered not much more than 30,000 in 1870, compared with about 200,000 in the Cape.* There was no regular standing army, and the police and civil services were negligible. The Republic was perennially bankrupt.

The Boer societies were non-progressive in their economic aspect. Each farmstead was an economic unit and they had little need for money except for those commodities which they needed – textiles, coffee etc. – and which were supplied by shopkeepers in the villages and travelling pedlars, mainly of foreign origin, Indian, British, Jewish and others.

Practically all the hard farm work was done by African labour and that of the Coloured retinue imported without their consent from the Cape.

Looked at from one level the Afrikaner society appeared democratic and egalitarian: there were no great divisions of wealth and class amongst them. But in fact it was a community based upon the brutal conquest and servitude of the majority of the people of the country, the appropriation of land and the exaction of forced, unpaid labour. The Boer Republics sought to perpetuate the economic structure which had previously developed under the rule of the Dutch mercantilists; to escape from and avoid the capitalist system of commodity production and the exploitation of paid labour. It was a vain attempt.

The Cape and Natal Colonies

During the course of the nineteenth century, capitalist relations and British colonialism had been imposed upon the people of the Cape and Natal, at the cost of millions of pounds and untold bloodshed and destruction.

Seventeenth and eighteenth century Dutch penetration was experienced by the Africans mainly as a series of incursions of robber bands intent on seizing land and cattle. Nineteenth century British colonialism was another matter, infinitely more formidable, and intent not only on annexing African land for occupation by British unemployed settlers, but also to destroy the Africans' traditional way of life and 'convert' them – with an army of professional soldiers, missionaries and traders – into docile proletarians, producers and consumers withing the capitalist system of the British empire.

With the spectacular growth of Britain's manufacturing industry and

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*The O.F.S. with its much smaller settler population (about 13,000) did not even attempt such a comprehensive system of control and regimentation.

the ascendancy of the industrial bourgeoisie, the main motive of British foreign and colonial policy shifted to the export of British manufactures. For the bourgeoisie the Empire became not merely a supplier of indigenous products, but a vast captive market for the sale of British textiles and other machine-made goods, and supplier of raw materials produced on a commodity basis by the super-exploitation of cheap colonial wage labour.

Apologists for imperialism dwell upon such phenomena as the existence of a degree of self-government and a Parliament, as well as the abolition of slavery, to support their contention that a more enlightened and benevolent administration existed in the Capy Colony and Natal. In fact, 'Cape Liberalism' was little more than a facade. The vote for the Parliament was at all times based on property and educational qualifications which could for the most part be attained only by whites; African and Coloured voters never amounted to more than a fraction of the electorate.

Behind this facade was the brutal reality: the destruction of the subsistence economy of the Africans, to turn them into providers of labour power and consumers of British manufactures. This purpose was achieved by the alliance of British imperialism and white settlers at the Cape. The process was frankly revealed by the pro-imperialist British historian, Cory:

> 'The only really effective tactics (against the Xhosa) were to burn his huts and kraals, to drive off his cattle, to destroy his corn and other food, in short to devastate his country.' (Sir George Cory: *The Rise of South Africa*, Vol. V, p. 365).

In the words of John Fairbairn, pioneer fighter for press freedom, writing in July 1835:

> The atrocity of the proceedings of the colonialists is without parallel among civilised people. The Kaffirs are termed savages, but it is the colonists who are most entitled to that appelation.

Together with the dispossession and proletarianisation of the Africans, British colonialism wrought far-reaching changes in the rural and urban areas of white settlement. The former semi-subsistence farming of the Boers was increasingly replaced by capitalist agriculture to supply raw materials (especially wool) for the British market. The sea-ports, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban grew into expanding urban centres with the consequent substructures of commerce and light industry, and stratification of the population. Wealthy merchants and exporters dominated the social and political life of the country; artisans and others began to form trade unions. Many of these were emigrants from Britain, and their unions were often established as branches of bodies with their headquarters in England.

Though established much later than the Capy Colony, the British administration in Natal followed a similar path of development. The military power of the Zulu nation having been broken, large tracts of

their lands were appropriated for white settlement, though they long resisted the process of proletarianisation.

An important development was the introduction of Indian workers to work in the Natal sugar fields.

Lacking, at that time, the means to force the Zulu people to work for them, the white planters succeeded, after much lobbying, in securing an arrangement to import indentured labourers from India on an indenture system. From 1860 to 1866 about 6,500 Indians, many of them with their families, were brought in. Though subjected, from the start, to the usual harsh discriminatory treatment, they made their homes in South Africa and came in time to outnumber the whites in Natal.

Their struggle for citizenship rights was to parallel and in time to merge with that of the Africans for national liberation.

Both in the Cape and Natal colonies, following the pattern of white settler populations in North America and Australasia, the local capitalist class sought increasingly to establish a greater degree of autonomy (but not separation) from Britain. The Cape Colony in particular strove to extend its own area of domination, conducting a war of extermination in Southern Botswana (then 'British Bechuanaland') and a fruitless military campaign (the 'Gun War') to disarm the Basotho.

By the end of the nineteenth century the indigenous people of Southern Africa had experienced successive phases and varieties of colonialism.

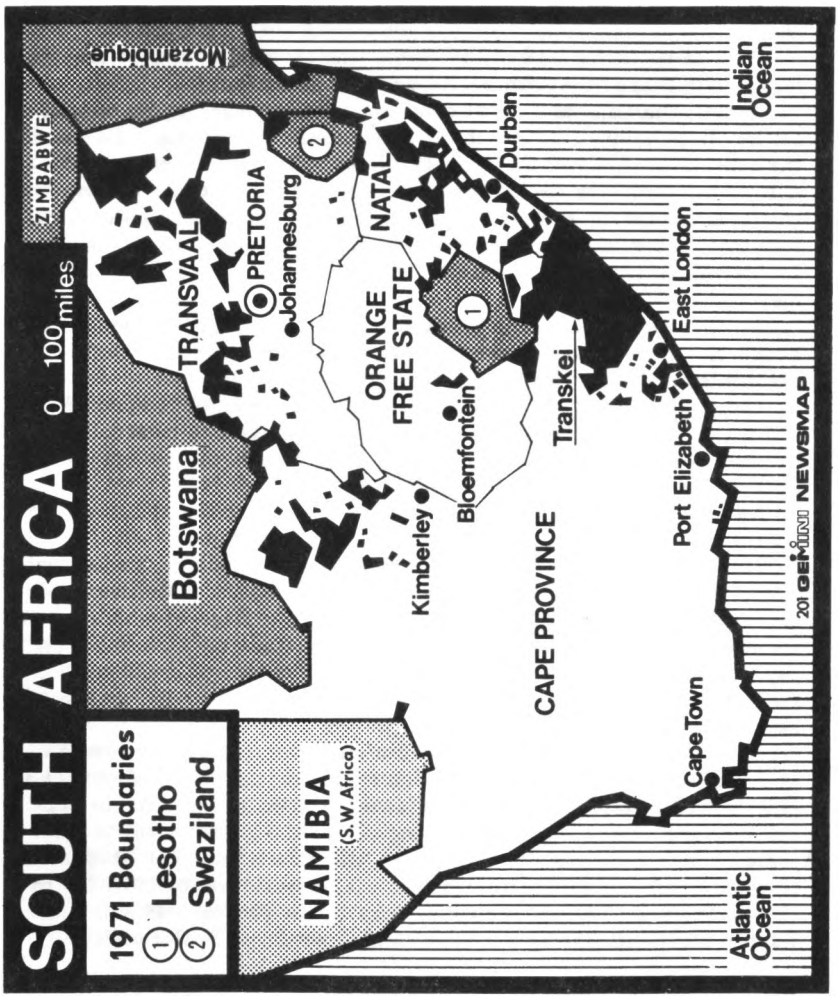
The earlier phase of Dutch mercantile settlement, accompanied by the limited penetration and pillage of white settlers, had been followed by the devastating impact of British imperialism of the era of its domination by the manufacturing bourgeoisie.

An even more intensive phase of domination and exploitation was to follow.

The world capitalist economy was rapidly moving towards its final stage, brilliantly analysed by V. I. Lenin in his definitive work *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, a stage in which great monopolies arose, in which banking capital merged with industrial capital in the major powers, resulting in the complete domination of their economic life and hence their state structure by giants of monopoly finance-capital. These sought ever more intensively to *export capital* to areas of higher profitability, especially in areas of underdevelopment, the source of rich resources and cheap labour. The effects were fierce competition between the major powers to seize colonies and the complete parcelling out of the entire world between them. The subsequent clash between the powers as they sought to redivide it was to explode into the imperialist world war of 1914-18. By the closing years of the nineteenth century the process was well under way, strongly influencing the course and direction of British policy.

In South Africa there were dramatic developments decisively determining the course and direction of British policy in that area, and accelerating the growth of imperialism itself. These were the discovery of the fabulously rich mineral resources in the interior: diamonds in Griqualand West and gold in the Transvaal.

These developments decisively affected the future course of South African history. A new era had begun, leading to the British occupation of the remaining African lands and Boer republics, the establishment of the Union of South Africa, and the birth of the revolutionary working class and national liberation movements.



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MODERN IMPERIALISM AND THE BIRTH OF THE LIBERATION AND LABOUR MOVEMENTS

Diamonds and gold

During the course of the nineteenth century imperial policy in South Africa fluctuated in accordance with conflicts of interest and policy within the British ruling class, the administrations in power in Britain and the High Commissioners appointed to Cape Town. Some, like Sir Harry Smith (1847-1852) were aggressively expansionist – he extended the borders of the Cape Colony to include the Transkei and annexed the Orange Free State, renamed the Orange River Sovereignty. He was replaced in 1852 by Sir George Cathcart, with instructions to disengage from the O.F.S. and cut British involvement to the limit. His successor, Sir George Grey (1846-61) had far-reaching plans for a British Federation of South Africa, but these were eventually turned down by Whitehall as too costly.

The closing third of the century, however, British policy was decisively affected not only by the ascendancy of monopoly finance capital at home and inter-imperialist rivalries for Africa, but also by dramatic events of world significance in South Africa itself.

These were the discovery of fabulously rich mineral resources beneath the surface: diamonds in Griqualand West (1870) followed by the opening of the Witwatersrand gold mines (1888).

The discovery of diamonds, and particularly that of underground resources of vast potential at what is now Kimberley, brought a rush of wealth-seekers and work-seekers from all over the world. Monopoly soon took over. The host of smaller claimholders who had participated in the early 'rush' to the diamond fields were bought or squeezed out. De Beers Consolidated Mines established a firm control over the Kimberley mines which were soon producing ninety per cent of the world supply of diamonds and by the end of a century had netted their owners no less than £700 million in gross returns.

The diamond fields at Kimberley changed the face of Cape Colony, just as the goldfields of Johannesburg, 18 years later would transform the whole of South Africa. The white workers who flocked to the diggings from all over the country, from Europe and even from America fought bitter struggles – on the one hand class battles against De Beers over wages and conditions; on the other to retain their privileged position in relation to the thousands of Coloured and African workers likewise attracted to employment on the mines. The African workers too entered the field of class organisation and struggle, coming out on strike for higher wages as early as 1882.

The new-rich diamond millionaires, backed by powerful financial institutions in Britain and elsewhere, became immensely powerful political figures in South Africa and abroad. The head of De Beers was Cecil Rhodes, a ruthless adventurer, obsessed by dreams of British imperial glory and boundless personal ambition. He became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (1890). With the blessing of the British government he established his own private company (the British South African Chartered Company) with its own private army, which invaded and carved up huge slices of African territory north of the Limpopo River, named with colossal megalomania 'Rhodesia', and attempted unsuccessfully to invade and capture the Transvaal.

The Drive for British Domination

The period from 1870 until the end of the century was marked by a wave of aggressive wars launched by Great Britain and its Cape Colony to conquer and dominate the entire sub-continent.

A brief chronology describes the process.

Griqualand West, the area of the diamond fields, was a country occupied by peoples of Khoikhoi Tswana and Coloured descent whose sovereignty under Chief Waterboer was recognised by treaty with Britain. In *1871* the treaty was set aside and the territory annexed by Britain. (In 1887-8 the Griqua, Tswana and Khoikhoi joined forces to gain independence; the rising was branded as 'rebellion' and savagely suppressed.)

In *1873* a war was waged by Britain against the Hlubi people under Langalibalele in Natal.

In *1877* – following a major defeat of the Commandos of the

Transvaal (then the South African Republic) by the Pedi under Sekhukhune – British troops entered Pretoria without resistance and annexed the Transvaal. (In 1880, after the British troops had overcome Pedi resistance, the Transvaal Boers unilaterally declared independence, recognised de facto by Britain.)

In *1879*, following their shattering defeat by the Zulu at the Battle of Isandhlwana the British moved into Zululand in force and imposed a peace which robbed the Zulu of most of their independence. (Zululand was annexed outright in 1887 and handed over to Natal in 1897.)

In the same year 1879 the Cape Colony annexed Fingoland, Idutywa and the independent Coloured Republic of Griqualand East under Adam Kok. With British approval the Colony expanded to include all remaining African areas west of Natal, concluding with Pondoland (1894.)

In *1884* a new factor appeared, hastening Britain's drive to dominate South Africa: the annexure of South-West Africa by Germany. Britain moved fast to establish the western frontier. She annexed southern Botswana outright as 'British Bechuanaland' (consolidated into the Cape Colony in 1895 by agreement between Whitehall and Cape Town). Northern Bechuanaland (present-day Botswana) was declared a British Protectorate.

In *1890* settlers of Rhodes's 'British South Africa Company' invaded Mashonaland, followed by penetration into Matabeleland. Between 1896 and 1897, prolonged wars of resistance were waged by the peoples of present-day Zimbabwe.

Also in 1890 Great Britain and the Transvaal Republic imposed a joint administration over Swaziland.

The last area of independent African resistance was not overcome until *1898*, a year before the Boer War, when with the aid of African conscripts the South African Republic defeated the Venda.

The opening of the Witwatersrand gold mines (1886) was of still greater import for the future of South Africa than that of the diamond mines. Money and men poured into the Transvaal. Within two years the forty four gold mines with a nominal capital of £6,800,000 were producing an annual output of £1,300,000. By 1890 the gold mines were employing over 100,000 workers: white immigrants mostly from Europe and Africans housed on mine property in the grim, prison-like bachelor compounds of the type which had originated at Kimberley. From a primitive mining camp, Johannesburg mushroomed to dwarf the capital Pretoria and become the greatest city in Southern Africa. Over the next hundred years the Witwatersrand was to produce £6,000 million worth of gold; the bulk of the capitalist world's supply. From the start the mining industry was dominated at monopoly finance capital. A handful of big companies dominated by the Kimberley mining millionaires, together with British and other foreign finance-capitalist institutions, controlled the industry and,

combined in the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, rapidly became the most powerful concentration of capitalist power in the country.

Boer War

The discovery of this veritable El Dorado determined British Imperialism to secure political and economic domination of the Boer Republics in the Transvaal and the O.F.S. In 1895 a conspiracy was hatched between Rhodes the Cape Premier and the British colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain to send in a raiding party from 'Rhodesia' to the Transvaal (the 'Jameson Raid'). But the plot was discovered, a planned uprising by pro-British elements in Johannesburg was nipped in the bud. The venture misfired hopelessly. Rhodes was made the scapegoat and dropped from public office, while preparations were made for full-scale war against the Republics.

The 'Boer War' broke out in October 1899.

The war was an expensive venture for British imperialism. 450,000 troops were sent to South Africa, of whom over 20,000 lost their lives. It cost the British taxpayers £250 million to secure the interests of the mining magnates. British prestige suffered incalculable damage; for the war was fought with the utmost barbarity. Boer women and children were confined in concentration camps, their homes and farms destroyed, before they could be brought to surrender; while the gallantry and brilliant guerilla strategy of the Afrikaners — a small nation defying the world's greatest imperial power in defence of their independence — won them the admiration and support of the democratic world, which knew little of the background: the dispossession and enslavement of the real owners of the highveld.

Following initial setbacks British forces occupied Johannesburg in May 1900, the Boer President Kruger was exiled and the annexation of the Republics was proclaimed. But the Boers refused to accept defeat; they carried on a stubborn guerilla war under commando leaders such as Generals de Wet, de lay Ray and Botha for a further two years.

Peace was signed, after prolonged negotiations, by the Treaty of Vereeniging (31 May 1902). Among the principal negotiators were Lord Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies; and Jan Christiaan Smuts, once an ardent supporter of Cecil Rhodes, who had been appointed States Attorney by Kruger and had served as a commando general, leading a guerilla raid in the Cape Colony towards the end of the Boer War.

No Africans were consulted about this treaty. British war-propaganda had made much of the semi-slavery and harsh anti-African policies of the Boer Republics, but under British rule the legality of Boer ownership of land stolen by force and fraud was confirmed; the white supremacy laws of the Republics left unaltered. A period of military government was to be followed 'at the earliest possible date' by

civil government. According to Article 8 of the Treaty of Vereeniging 'The question of granting the franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government.' 'Self-government' therefore meant rule by the white minority.

In December 1906 the British Parliament approved a constitution for the Transvaal with a franchise confined to white men and the Het Volk Party, headed by Generals Botha and Smuts took office. A similar constitution for the Orange River Colony was adopted six months later and resulted in the election of Abraham Fischer as Prime Minister.

The Union of South Africa

> South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet the masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain, in 1910, was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of people of South Africa, but into the hands of the White minority alone. The evils of colonialism, in so far as the non-White majority was concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing White nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them.
>
> —*The Road to South African Freedom*

Not for the first time, nor the last, British imperialism had purchased peace at the expense of other people's land and liberties. Despite the differences between them which erupted into the war of 1889-1902, British imperialism and Boer colonialism found common ground in the destruction of African land-ownership and traditional societies; and the enforced exploitation of African labour. That was the basis of the Treaty of Vereeniging. It was carried forward in the period of military government under Milner whose policy was 'a self-governing white community supported by . . . black labour from Cape Town to the Zambesi.'

The alliance was consolidated by the formation in 1910 of the Union of South Africa. Following an all-white 'National Convention' representing the legislatures of the Transvaal, Cape, Natal and Orange Colonies, the British Parliament approved — against the opposition of the then small Labour Party and the Irish Republicans — a constitution providing for an all-white Parliament for the new self-governing Dominion.

In three of the four Provinces (the former Colonies) only whites could vote. In the fourth, following the tradition of the Cape Colony, a certain number of 'qualified' Coloured and African men (a fraction of the electorate) were allowed the privilege of choosing which representative 'of pure European descent' to vote for.

Reflecting the economic predominance of the Transvaal, Generals Botha and Smuts headed the first Union Cabinet, representing the

alliance of imperialism, mining monopolies and the burgeoning class of capitalist large-scale farmers. Their rising prosperity depended upon speeding the flow of labour at the lowest possible rates of pay to mines and farms. The accomplishment of this objective was, and has remained, the main preoccupation of the South African capitalist class and its government.

Even before the Boer War, the Chamber of Mines had repeatedly petitioned the Republican government to secure, by coercion, taxation and other methods a more ample supply of African labour. The mining houses having agreed among themselves to cut wages (the notorious *maximum average wage* schedule, still in operation) found difficulty in getting Africans to come in sufficient numbers to do the hard, dangerous and unhealthy, unskilled jobs on the mines for a beggarly 30s. a month. In 1903, after the war, which had temporarily closed down the mines, a Commission appointed by the Milner government submitted a report which in the words of L. Bernstein ('The Great Conspiracy' *Liberation*, Nos. 11 and 12, Johannesburg 1956) expresses 'perhaps more clearly than any other document, the attitude of the Chamber of Mines and its agents to the African labourer'.

'The scarcity of native labour' it reported, 'is due first and foremost to the fact that the African native tribes are for the most part primitive peasant communities who possess exceptional facilities for the regular and full supply of their . . . needs . . . The African natives are in possession or occupation of large areas of land. No considerable change can reasonably be anticipated in their industrial habits until a great modification of these conditions has been brought about.'

Concrete proposals included 'compulsion, direct or indirect changes in native tribal system or changes in land tenure . . . higher taxes . . . The more weighty proposals to improve the supply (of African labour) recommended that the existing native social system should be attacked with the object of modifying or destroying it.'

These 'weighty proposals' were indeed to be implemented. It was a lengthy process involving the unification of South Africa (1910) the Native Land Act (1913) and the subsequent enforcement of innumerable anti-African laws and practices by the successive governments of the Union and subsequently the Republic of South Africa. In the meantime the need was met by the massive importation of indentured semi-slave labour from outside, especially from Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) and China. The labour force in 1906 consisted of 94,000 Africans, 51,000 Chinese and 18,000 whites. But this practice, reminiscent of the slave trade (the Chinese labourers, recruited with the connivance of the subservient Chinese government of the day under pressure from the British Tory administration, received five shillings pay for a sixty-hour week) led to a storm of protest — not only in South Africa but also in Britain. It became a major election issue in 1905 when the Tory Chamberlain government was defeated by

the Liberal Party. The Chinese were repatriated by 1907.

National Liberation Movements

The defeat of the separated and ill-equipped African tribes was followed by a rapidly-growing national and political consciousness among the people, expressed particularly by the few among them who had the opportunity to acquire modern education and contact with the outside world. *Imbumba Yama Afrika*, the first African political organisation, was established in the Eastern Cape in 1882 by African teachers, clergymen and others; two years later the first African newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Voice of the Black People) was started, with financial backing from white liberals, by John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1921), who also established the 'Native Electoral Association' representing that relatively small minority of Africans able to qualify for the property and educational standards required to vote for the Cape Legislative Assembly.

Similar organisations and newspapers were founded in the other colonies by men such as Rev. J. L. Dube in Natal, T. Makipela in the O.F.S. and Dr. P. I. Seme, a graduate of Columbia University (U.S.A.), in the Transvaal.

The approach of Union, and the colour-bar constitution adopted by the all-white National Convention, stimulated the unification of these early organisations. The draft Union Constitution was published in February 1909. Within a month African leaders from all four colonies met in a national convention at Bloemfontein. It was decided to send a deputation to the British Parliament to demand rejection of the anti-African provisions of the South Africa Act and the substitution of a non-colour bar constitution for the Union.

The deputation was joined by representatives of the pioneer Coloured people's organisation, the *African People's Organisation*, headed by its president, Dr. Abdul Abdurahman. Also accompanying them as legal adviser was W. P. Schreiner, a former Cape Prime Minister and brother of the novelist and pioneer socialist, Olive Schreiner.

The ignoring of this deputation by the major British political Parties, the establishment of the Union under the anti-African Smuts-Botha government, and its first major onslaught on the Africans' remaining land rights, the Native Land Bill of 1912, brought home to Africans throughout the country the imperative need for an effective national organisation which could unite the people, regardless of tribal origin or language, for an effective struggle against white minority domination. A clarion call for unity was issued by Dr. Seme:

> 'The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo raids, the animosity that exists between Zulus and the Tsongas, the Basotho and every other Native, must be buried and forgotten . . . We are one people.'

The call met with an overwhelmingly favourable response. The

African Congresses which had been formed in the Transvaal, Natal and Free State, the pioneer African movements in the Cape, and the traditional rulers of many African peoples approved the planned formation of a single organisation to represent their interests.

It was this spirit of African unity that inspired the foundation on 8 January 1912 of the *African National Congress.* The foundation conference was a most notable occasion in South African history, and an outstanding achievement for the times.

Many of the moving spirits were patriotic African intellectuals: lawyers like Seme, A. Mangena, R. W. Msimang, G. D. Montsioa, ministers like Dube and Rubusana, teachers like Sol. T. Plaatje, the first secretary general.

The great mass of the people in the countryside were represented by Chiefs who in that period were still able to voice their interests. Modelled in part on the British and U.S. Constitutions, the first ANC Constitution provided for an 'Upper House' of Chiefs, many of whom were present at the founding Conference. Letsie II of Lesotho accepted the position of honourary president as did the chiefs of the Kgatla, Lozi, Ngwato, Rolong, Tembu, Pondo and Zulu people.

From its inception the African National Congress* conducted campaigns of mass meetings arousing the people against the provisions of the Land Act and other grievances, particularly the extension of pass laws to women in the O.F.S. It was a pioneer in the cause of the unity of all African peoples, not only in the Union but throughout the continent, evidenced in its slogan *(Mayibuye i'Afrika!* — Return Africa!).

In its earlier period the leadership was predominantly composed of members of the literate minority of men who could speak English and of traditional chiefs. Its pronouncements were usually of studied moderation. This led many observers to underestimate the actual and potential significance of the Congress.

Yet the ANC had a profoundly revolutionary objective — the building of a united African nation aiming consciously at liberation and the assertion of its rights. It truly represented the aspirations and interests of the masses. The establishment of the ANC was an historic and courageous action which inevitably led to its development into a fighting liberation movement aiming at the revolutionary conquest of people's power.

Indian Resistance

The Indian people also had embarked upon a series of struggles against race discrimination: the common lot of all 'non-whites' in South Africa.

The Indian community in Natal — descendants of those who had been indentured to work in the sugar-fields and others — found

*The original name was 'The South African National Native Congress.'

themselves increasingly subjected to the South African brand of discrimination and insult meted out to every one whose skin was not white. In 1893 a young Indian lawyer, Mohandas K. Gandhi, came to South Africa on legal business. Shocked and moved by the treatment of Natal Indians, he began to organise the foundations of the Natal Indian Congress. It was the beginning of a life devoted to public affairs. Contrary to his intentions, Gandhi did not leave South Africa until 1914. In the Transvaal, under the British colonial administrations of Milner and his successor, Lord Selborne the anti-Asian laws of the Republic had been tightened up and extended. (The Orange Free State had totally banned Asians from entering – a barrier which continued under British rule and to the present day.) A new series of anti-Asian measures was introduced by the Botha-Smuts government as soon as it took office in the Transvaal in 1907.

The Indians of Natal and the Transvaal responded with a series of spectacular passive resistance campaigns inspired by Gandhi's developing philosophy of 'satyagraha' and non-violent resistance. Whatever their philosophical background, these campaigns united the Indian community and mobilised them for mass political action. They flouted Smuts's laws and courted imprisonment. In 1913 a massive and completely effective strike of Indian workers was accompanied by a mass march across the forbidden frontier between Natal and the Transvaal. These actions aroused the enthusiasm and political consciousness of the Indian community to a high pitch. They also focussed Indian and world opinion on the ugly reality of South African racialism and won widespread support from democrats of all South African national groups. Even the Transvaal Federation of Trades was moved to a rare expression of solidarity across the colour line when it adopted a resolution on the 1913 strike of Natal Indians expressing 'sympathy with the Asiatics in their struggle' and demanding 'that no white man scab on them.'

Gandhi left for his homeland in 1914. There he continued the quest for liberation he had begun in South Africa, in a manner which has become a part of Indian and world history. He left a legacy of self-sacrificing mass struggle, and the foundation of organisations in the Transvaal and Natal which, in their later development as the South African Indian Congress, wrote stirring chapters into the story of the freedom struggle.

Coloured Awakening

In the early years of Dutch settlement at the Cape no rigid social distinctions on lines of colour were made. The colonists mingled and intermarried with the Khoikhoi and other Africans, and also with those former slaves from Indonesia ('Malays') and elsewhere who had gained freedom. Colour prejudice and white chauvinism grew with the wars of dispossession against Africans, and the desire of the white minority to

monopolise land, property and opportunities. A national group developed – the Coloured people – increasingly the victims of harsh racialist laws and practices which relegated most of them and their descendants to the status of urban and rural wage workers, and denied them equal rights.

On many occasions the Coloured people fought militant battles for their rights. There were slave rebellions in the Cape. Coloured slaves conscripted to fight the Xhosa mutinied and joined forces with their fellow-Africans. Large numbers emigrated beyond the borders of the Cape Colony where, calling themselves the Griquas, after the name of a Khoikhoi tribe, they established states under Waterboer, Adam Kok and other leaders, whose independence was recognised until the white colonists and British imperialism coveted their land.

But most of them remained in the Western Cape, where they formed the bulk of the working population in town and country, and where, through continuous struggle, they won a measure of civil rights expressed particularly in the right of men of colour to vote and even to stand for election to the Cape Parliament and town councils, even though the franchise excluded all but the wealthiest and best-educated members of the community.

The pioneer political movement among the Coloured people was the African People's Organisation, established in Cape Town in 1902, whose chief spokesman, for many years was Dr. Abdul Abdurahman (1872-1940), continuously re-elected President for thirty-six years until his death. The A.P.O., as reflected by its name, identified itself with the indigenous masses and was a pioneer of the concept of a united front of the oppressed people against white minority rule. 'If Europeans persist in their policy of oppression there will one day arise a solid mass of Black and Coloured humanity whose demands will be irrepressible,' Abdurahman wrote as early as 1909. When the A.P.O. took part, together with African leaders, in the joint deputation to Britain in 1909 in a vain attempt to prevent the British Parliament from approving the South Africa Act, Dr. Abdurahman was impressed by and drew far-reaching conclusions from the solidarity shown by the British Labour Party with the oppressed people of South Africa. The organisation's paper, the *A.P.O.* appealed to the predominantly white trade union and labour movement in South Africa to show a like solidarity with their non-white fellow-workers. 'Too long have black and white been played off against one another,' it wrote in 1909. 'It is to the Socialists that we must look for help in our fight against a class tyranny that deprives us of political freedom.'

The arrogant rejection of such appeals by most of the political and trade union leaders of the white workers strengthened the influence within the A.P.O. of those middle-class elements who sought to win concessions through compromises and election deals with sections of the white bourgeoisie, and thus to reduce the Coloured liberation

movement to a pawn in the game of the parliamentary politicians.

The Labour Movement

Rejection of an alliance with the liberation movements was implicit in the origin and character of the labour movement consisting mainly of European immigrants, which had developed in the four colonies which constituted South Africa. As early as the nineteenth century, branches of British trade unions had been established in Cape Town and other coastal cities. The era of gold and diamonds, of modern imperialism, saw the centre of economic development transferred decisively to the north. The mines became the arena of fierce class struggle where monopoly capitalism confronted the tens of thousands of immigrant workers in the De Beers-owned and run town of Kimberley and in the turbulent 'mining-camp' atmosphere of the Witwatersrand.

Imbued with the spirit of British craft unionism as well as with colour and national prejudice, the miners and other white workers, though they fought courageously against the mining millionaires and their government, showed small sympathy with the exploitation and oppression of their African fellow-workers. Strikes were frequent, prolonged and often bloody.

These struggles came to a head in May 1913, when 68 thousand Rand miners downed tools demanding trade union recognition and an 8-hour day – a strike which was not broken until the government called in police and troops, killing a number of workers in street clashes. In December the same year the Transvaal Federation of Trades called for a general strike, in protest against the decision by Smuts, Minister of Defence, to declare martial law to break a stoppage by railwaymen. Smuts' reply was to bring an army of 70,000 men, arrest nine union leaders and illegally deport them to England, arousing a storm of protest at home and in Britain.

The development of trade unions was accompanied as in other capitalist countries by the formation of working class political parties with more or less clearly defined socialist objectives.

In 1902 a branch of the British Social Democratic Federation was established in the Cape, and a similar group was formed in Johannesburg in the same year. The internationalist spirit of the Cape Social Democrats was attested by a public meeting in solidarity with the 1905 Russian Revolution.

It is interesting to recall that a message to this meeting was received from the novelist Olive Schreiner, who had formed a close friendship with the Marx family when visiting London, and never lost her socialist convictions. Her message on the 1905 Revolution declared:

'We are witnessing the beginning of the greatest event that has taken place in the history of humanity during the last centuries'.

Other socialist organisations in the colonies before Union were usually branches of British bodies, such as the Independent Labour

Party in the Transvaal, the Clarion Fellowship in Natal, and on the extreme Left, the Socialist Labour Party.

The Transvaal elections of 1907 saw the emergence, for the first time, of the labour movement as a serious electoral force. The Labour Representation Committee was backed by the Witwatersrand Trades Council under the chairmanship of W. H. Andrews and most of the socialist organisations. It contested seven out of the thirteen seats in the Transvaal, and won three of them, polling 5,216 of a total of 13,180 votes cast. This encouraging start gave a great fillip to the labour movement and led to the formation in 1909 of the South African Labour Party, which anticipated the Act of Union in 1910 by becoming the first political party to be established on a nationwide scale transcending the former colonial boundaries.

The South African Labour Party

Nearly all the country's trade unions and socialist societies joined forces in launching the new Party – a notable exception being the Socialist Labour Party. The socialists and trade unionists who formed the Labour Party were united in their determination to gain adequate workers' representation in the Union Parliament and the various provincial and local councils – but in little else. From its inception deep differences existed; opinions varying from right-wing opportunism, typified by Frederick Creswell, former mine-manager and an ardent upholder of 'white labour' and British imperialism, to forces supporting socialist internationalism on the Left.

The latter succeeded in writing a socialist objective into the Party's constitution and securing its affiliation to the Second International. But on the all-important question of the Party's attitude towards the oppressed African majority, right-wing views prevailed. Claiming that radical approaches to 'the native question' would scare away the voters, they succeeded in deferring indefinitely any definition of policy on the central problem of the country – leaving the Labour Party in effect to trail behind the white chauvinist policies of the bourgeois Parties.

Although represented in Parliament, the Labour Party raised no effective protest against the Native Land Act passed in 1913. Nevertheless, the opposition to it headed by the A.N.C., the inspiring struggle of the Indian people in the same year; the violent clashes between the Transvaal workers and the Botha-Smuts government and – perhaps most effective – a massive strike of African mine labourers for better pay: all these events left a deep impression on the labour movement.

The mood was reflected at the 1913 Labour Party conference, which decided, though not without strong opposition, to admit Coloured members. It also elected an executive far more advanced and principled than its predecessor.

Three of them in particular were destined to play an outstanding

role in the revolutionary working class movement of South Africa: the chairman, W. H. Andrews, the secretary, D. I. Jones, and S. P. Bunting.

The 1914-1918 War

> 'The experience of the war, like the experience of many crises in history, of any great calamity and any sudden turn in human life, stuns and breaks some people, but enlightens and tempers others.'
>
> LENIN, *The Collapse of the Second International*

As with most of the Parties of the Second International, the onset of the first world war brought out within the Labour Party the deep internal conflict between revolutionary, internationalist elements on the one hand and opportunist, jingoist elements on the other.

Unlike the leaders of most of the Parties affiliated to the Second International, the South African Labour Party remained faithful to the well-known anti-war Basle resolution of the International in the drafting of which Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg had participated.* As early as 2 August 1914 the S.A.L.P. Administrative Council, comprising delegates from branches, adopted a resolution expressing its

> 'protest against the capitalist governments of Europe in fomenting a war which can only benefit the international armaments manufacturers' ring and other enemies of the working class, and appeals to the workers of the world to organise and refrain from participating in this unjust war.'

Similar resolutions were adopted by Social-Democratic organisations in the Cape and Natal, and by the trade unions united in the S. A. Industrial Federation.

This militant stand was challenged after the Botha-Smuts government decided in September 1914 to join Britain and invaded German South West Africa (not without opposition from Afrikaner nationalists, some of whom even staged an ill-fated and brutally suppressed rebellion.)

Right-wingers in the Labour Party intrigued furiously within the branches to whip up jingoism and drag the Party behind the government and the war effort of British imperialism. Their leader, Creswell volunteered for military service and was promoted Colonel; the Party organ *The Worker*, edited by his colleague, W. Wybergh, campaigned publicly to whip up war fever.

The internationalists fought back. In September 1914, S. P. Bunting, Ivon Jones, Colin Wade and others within the Labour Party established the War on War League. Much of its propaganda was revolutionary and socialist in content.

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*The resolution, passed unanimously by the International Socialist Congress at Basle, Switzerland, in 1912, foresaw the type of war which broke out in 1914, declared that was reactionary, was being prepared in the interest of 'capitalist profits'; declared that the workers consider it 'a crime to shoot each other down' and that the war would lead to a proletarian revolution.

A pamphlet 'Keeping the Red Flag Flying' (March 1915) addressed by the League to members of the Labour Party, emphasised 'the profound opposition between socialism and militarism, the fundamentally capitalist origin of war, the essentially international character of working class solidarity'. Recalling the famous slogan, 'Workers of the World Unite' of the 'authors of the Communist Manifesto fifty years ago' the pamphlet declared that 'the Administrative Council of the South African Labour Party as well as the South African Industrial Federation, true to tradition, reiterated their adherence to the same principles.'

The War on War League firmly identified itself with those trends in the international labour movement who had stood firm against the stream of chauvinism. 'In Germany the grand figure of Liebknecht . . . stands at the head of a large and increasing army of anti-war Socialists. In Russia, the Socialist Party, more consistent than all, has throughout opposed the war at the price of wholesale arrest, deportation and execution.'

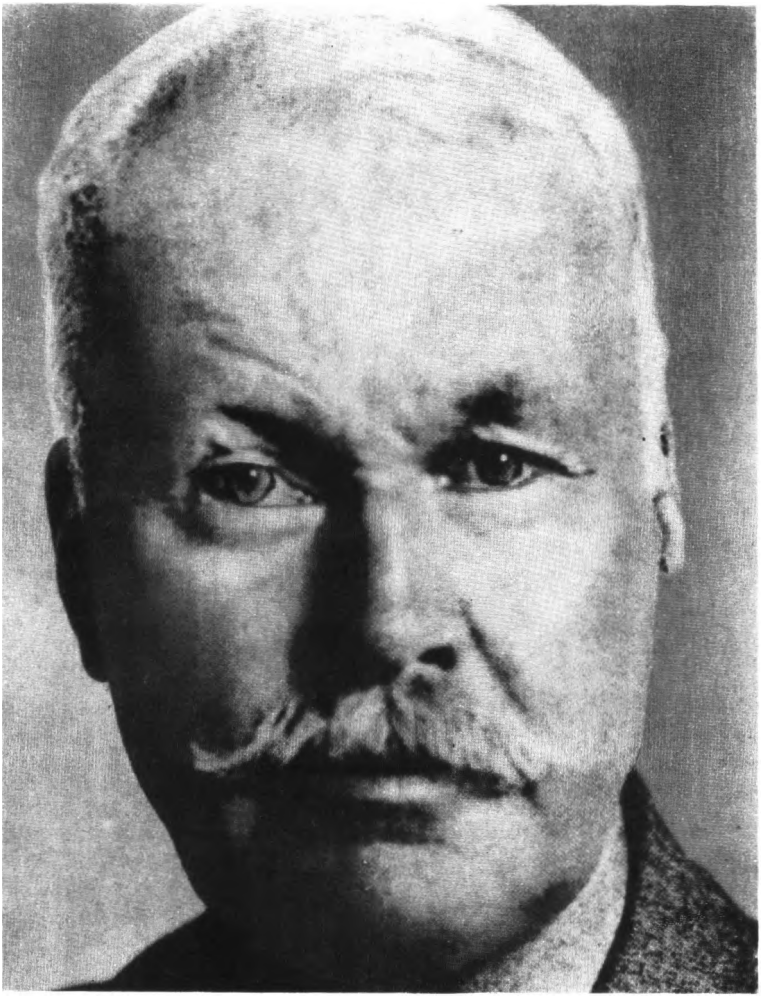
The internationalists, in the face of intensive censorship and persecution by the Botha-Smuts government, persisted courageously with their policy inside and outside the Party. The Creswellites, advocates of the 'see-it-through' policy, by contrast resorted to underhand factional activities and relied on whipping up jingoism.

By July 1915 this intrigue had reached such serious proportions that a public rebuke *'The Labour Party's Duty in the War – A Reply to the "See-it-Through" Policy'* was issued by twenty leading members of the Party, headed by the Chairman, Bill Andrews, the Secretary, David Ivon Jones, S. P. Bunting, Colin Wade and others, including six members of the Transvaal Provincial Council. There was no denying, they wrote, that 'serious differences' existed in the Party about the war. Cresswell spoke about his 'duty to his country.' His real loyalty was not to South Africa but to the Empire. But 'the Labour or democratic principle and the imperialist principle cannot subsist in the one policy.' 'Socialism must imply real self-government for South Africa.'

> It is the Labour Party's duty to the country not at all hazards to win the next elections, but to stand firm . . . to the principle of peace and international goodwill and to the identity of interest of the international working class.

The appeal was in vain. The 'see-it-through' imperialist faction succeeded in August forcing a special conference, packed by the Creswellites, at which they carried a pro-war resolution.

The Right Wing followed up this victory by demanding that all candidates for the coming elections pledge their support for the war. In protest eight executive members headed by the Chairman (Andrews), the Secretary (Jones) and the treasurer (Weinstock) resigned from their positions. A new body of internationalists, incorporating the War on War League, was formed, and started its own weekly – *The*



W. H. Andrews (1870 - 1950)

D. I. Jones (1883 - 1924)

S. P. Bunting (1873 - 1936)

J. La Guma (1884 - 1961)

International. Within a few weeks it became clear that the Labour Party would not tolerate a revolutionary wing within its ranks.

In September 1915 they therefore quit the Labour Party and established a new organisation: the International Socialist League of South Africa. In this they were joined by the De Leonite Socialist Labour Party which had stood aloof from the Labour Party and whose ideas were of considerable importance, positive and negative, in moulding the ideology of the I.S.L.

The New International

'Here we plant the flag of the New International in South Africa.' These were the challenging words with which David Ivon Jones began his editorial in the very first issue of *The International.* For he and his comrades did not believe that the desertion of the leaders of the European socialist movement meant the end of that movement; they believed that out of that experience a new and greater movement would arise on sound, revolutionary foundations – the 'New International.' It was the very thought which Lenin had expressed in November 1914 when, unknown to the South Africans, whose knowledge of overseas developments was obscured by heavy censorship, he had written:

> 'The Second International is dead, overcome by opportunism. Down with opportunism, and long live the Third International!'

'What the labour movement requires is a return to the limpid, unequivocal affirmations of the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx.' wrote *The International* ('Back to the Manifesto' – 10 December 1915.)

It was precisely these two main characteristics of the I.S.L.: its devoted internationalism; and its determination to break with the opportunism of the Labour Party and return to the 'limpid, unequivocal affirmations' of Marxism which were its chief strengths. These were the qualities which enabled it to survive and develop, to overcome all its inner difficulties and external hostility, to provide the main foundation upon which the Communist Party was built in 1921.

For the I.S.L. the break with the Labour Party meant a searching review of the opportunist errors which had led to its corruption: the assumption that it was the Party's duty 'at all hazards to win the next election' – and above all, that the white workers alone were or could be the vanguard of socialism in South Africa. Already in October 1915 Jones had written: 'An internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the Native working class is capable of claiming will be a sham. Not until we free the Natives can we hope to free the Whites.' He returned to the theme in *The International* in December 1915:

> Slaves to a higher oligarchy, the white workers of South Africa themselves batten on a lower slave class, the native races. Thus has the South African labour movement grown more intolerant to the native slaves than any other

> working class in the world, and consequently more parasitical than any other. To such a movement, talk of the international unity of the working class could never arouse sincere response.

The first Congress of the ISL, in January 1916, adopted a 'petition of rights' moved by S. P. Bunting, who was to prove a tireless advocate of African rights. This document demanded the abolition of pass laws and indentured and compound labour, and equal rights, political and industrial, for African workers.

The League began to turn an ever-increasing proportion of its attention and activities towards socialist propaganda among the African and other non-white workers. In the election of 1916 for the Transvaal Provincial Council the League candidate, W. H. Andrews declared that it was the 'imperative duty of the white workers to recognise their identity of interest with the native worker as against their common masters . . . It is time for the white workers to deal with the native as a man and a fellow worker and not as a chattel slave or serf. Only that way lies freedom and justice for all.'

In contrast with the indifference shown by the Labour Party in 1913 towards the Native Land Act, the League campaigned in protest against Native Administration Bill of 1917, designed to complete the process of African proletarianisation. A meeting held in Johannesburg in March that year was an historic occasion, for ANC leaders S. Msane and A. Mbelle had accepted the League's invitation to share its platform: an extraordinary event for the times.

The Russian Revolution

The upheavals in Russia in 1917 made a powerful impact upon the workers and oppressed people of South Africa. The significance of Russia had never been lost upon the South African radicals, some of whom indeed were refugees from Tsarism.

The International, and particularly Ivon Jones its editor, responded to the Russian events with enthusiasm and a perception remarkable in one so far from the scene of action. As early as February 1917 when progressives the world over were exulting at the downfall of Tsarism, Jones wrote:

> This is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent it cannot be a repetition of previous revolutions. Now two classes pursue their several ways: one 'to prosecute the war abroad' and 'law and order' at home; the other to pursue the class war at home and the Socialist Republic in all countries.
>
> '170 Million Recruits' – *The International,* March 23, 1917.

From then on *The International* returned with mounting emphasis to the Russian events. 'Exactly what the I.S.L. would have done . . . that is what the Russian workmen have done.' (April) 'Russian Workmen Vindicate Marx' (Editorial, May) 'Full Support to the Russian

Proletariat' (June).

From July 1917 onwards *The International* began to receive and pass on to its readers information from actual Bolshevik sources. The July, 1917, issue reproduced almost in full an article from *Pravda* (described as 'Lenin's Organ') and passages from *Pravda* appeared in nearly every issue thereafter, as well as from *Izvestia*. 'Lenin on the Top' was the heading of an editorial (August 31) declaring: 'The situation is developing in favour of the principles advocated by Lenin. Every week proves him right.'

Dawn of the World

The Great October Revolution was a triumphant vindication for Ivon Jones and his comrades. In November 1917 he wrote, under the above title:

> What we are witnessing is an unfolding of the world-wide Commonwealth of Labour, which if the oppressed of all lands only knew . . . would sweep them into transports of gladness. It is this high ecstasy which animates the Russian people today . . . Our task in South Africa is a great one. We must educate the people in the principles of the Russian Revolution. We have to prepare the workers against any attempt to mobilise them against their Russian comrades, and in preparing, spread the flames of the most glorious and most peaceful revolution of all time.

'We are South African Bolsheviks' declared the I.S.L. A pamphlet *The Bolsheviks are Coming*, written by Jones and L. H. Green was published in English, Zulu and Sesotho in 1918, addressed 'to the workers of South Africa – Black as well as White.'*

For distributing this leaflet in Martizburg Jones and Green were prosecuted for 'inciting to public violence,' and found guilty, the magistrate commenting that the leaflet was 'libellous, treasonable and indeed diabolical.'

In Durban an Indian Workers' Industrial Union, was established and sent a delegate to the annual conference of the I.S.L. in January 1918. Backed by the African National Congress, the I.S.L. founded the Industrial Workers of Africa, a general union of African workers, later to become absorbed by the I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) which flourished mightily in the twenties and counted its membership in tens of thousands.

'Don't Scab

In 1919 over 70,000 African miners on the Witwatersrand came out on strike. The I.S.L., issued a leaflet to the white workers: 'Don't Scab!'

> White Workers! Do you hear the new Army of Labour coming? The native workers are beginning to wake up. They are finding out that they are slaves to the big capitalists.

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*See Appendix I.

But they want to rise. Why not? They want better housing and better clothes, better education and a higher standard of life.

White workers! On which side are you? Your interests and theirs are the same as against the Boss.

Back them up! The Chamber of Mines will be asking you to take up the rifle to dragoon the Native strikers. Don't do it!

Leaflets were distributed to African miners and other workers in Zulu, Sesotho and other languages. Among them were a simple series of 'lessons' for those new to Marxism. 'Lesson 1' began:

In the days gone by the Bantu people lived alone upon the land of Africa. The land belonged to them and they brought forth the fruits of the kindly earth for their common good. And in those days the only Masters were the Kings of the Bantu people. Then came the white masters of the world and took away the land from the Bantu people so that they served the white masters and toiled for low wages. This is now come to pass more than two hundred years – since the white masters of the world came to South Africa and prepared to make slaves of the Bantu people.'

Others in the series went on to explain the ideas of working-class internationalism and workers' organisation, and the significance of the Russian Revolution.

The Comintern

The International Socialist League enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of the Third International (the Comintern). It was among the first Parties to apply for affiliation and was represented at the third world Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1920, by two delegates: D. I. Jones* and Sam Barlin.

Others in South Africa had also been drawn Leftwards by the magnetic attraction of the October Revolution. In Cape Town, a group of revolutionaries headed by Manuel Lopez, A. Z. Berman and J. Pick, broke away from the Social-Democratic Federation and established the *Industrial* Socialist League. Although influenced by ultra-left syndicalist ideas, it identified itself with the Russian revolution and entitled its monthly journal *The Bolshevik*. A like-minded group in the Transvaal broke away from the International Socialist League when their motion for a total boycott of Parliamentary elections was rejected at the fifth national conference of that body at the beginning of 1920. In October that year these two groups announced that they had merged into the 'Communist Party of South Africa' – though their ultra-left stance,

*David Ivon Jones did not return to South Africa. He remained in Moscow where he participated with Lenin and others in the structure of the Communist International. The ill-health which had pursued him for most of his life overtook him and he died at a tuberculosis sanitorium in Yalta in 1924. Hence he did not personally take part in the formation of the Communist Party, though he remained in regular correspondence with Bunting, Andrews and others until his death.

which isolated them from most South African Communists, made their usurpation of the title presumptuous.

This application, like those of other minority socialist groups, was unacceptable. The fifth annual conference of the International Socialist League had unanimously decided on January 4, 1920, to formally apply for affiliation: its letter to this effect having been read out, with applause, at the Second Congress of the Comintern on July 24, 1920.

Like several other groups and circles, such as the Jewish Socialist Society and the Indian workers' union of Natal, they were anxious to affiliate to the Communist International. However, among the rules adopted at the Third International Congress (the 'Twenty-One Conditions' formulated by Lenin) there was one which precluded the affiliation of more than on Party from any country.

Accordingly, the International Socialist League took the initiative of bringing together all the socialist parties, groups and individuals with the object of establishing a single, disciplined and centralised Communist Party.

100 delegates from nearly all the socialist organisations – excluding the Labour Party, though some of its individual members took part – met in Johannesburg on January 2, 1921, and nearly all agreed on the 'Twenty-One Conditions'.

Foundation of the Communist Party

By March 1921 a sufficient measure of agreement had been reached to enable the election of a joint Unity Committee to draft a Manifesto and Constitution and prepare for the Founding Conference of the Communist Party.

This took place in Cape Town, from 30 July to 1 August 1921. It was preceded by a public meeting, attended by over two thousand, mainly Coloured workers, addressed by Bill Andrews, who announced the establishment, aims and character of the new Party.

The Conference formally established the Communist Party of South Africa (South African Section of the Communist International), and adopted its constitution and manifesto. It also elected an executive, with its headquarters in Johannesburg. W. H. Andrews was elected secretary-editor, C. B. Tyler chairman and S. P. Bunting, Treasurer.* The organ of the new Party was to be *The International,* and it took over the I.S.L.'s press and offices.

The Manifesto pledged the newly-born Party to struggle despite 'any sacrifices it may be called upon to undergo, to hasten the time.

> when mankind shall no longer cower under the bludgeon of the oppressor, when the necessaries and amenities of life, the comfort and the culture, the honour and the power, shall be to him who toils, not him who exploits; when

*The other members were G. Arnold, Rebecca Bunting, T. Chapman, J. den Bakker, R. Geldblum, H. Lee, E. M. Pincus and R. Rabb.

none shall be called master and none servant, but all shall be fellow-workers in common. (Text in Appendix II)

From the I.S.L. to the Communist Party

At its outset, in its membership, leadership and outlook, the young Communist Party bore the powerful impress of its main constituent body, the International Socialist League. Some commentators have concluded that the Party was 'virtually a continuation of the League'; indeed as late as 1929 the national conference of the Party referred to its 'origins in 1915.'

Yet the foundation of the Communist Party in 1921 marked something far more profound than a mere change of name. It marked a decisive turning-point in the evolution of the Party, its character, aims and outlook.

The International Socialist League was far from being an ideologically homogeneous and united organisation. Its leaders and founders (among them, particularly in the person of W. H. Andrews, the very founders and leaders of the labour movement of the organised – i.e., at that time, the white – working class) had broken with the right wing of the Labour Party to maintain the principle of proletarian internationalism.

So doing they broke at the same time with white chauvinism and the opportunism which led the Labour Party to consider the 'native question' mainly from the point of view of what would be acceptable to the white electorate.

Liberated from the stultifying atmosphere of the Labour Party the I.S.L. began boldly to rethink its attutide towards the African people, and the African workers in particular. It courageously attacked racialism in principle; it drew up a 'Charter of African Rights' which, with all its imperfections, was a tremendous advance on the segregationism of the Labour Party and indeed of any 'liberal' programme of the time; it established relations with the A.N.C. and invited its speakers to share the League's platform; it began an energetic drive for the industrial organisation of the black workers.

Despite all these substantial and historic achievements the I.S.L. was never able either to evolve a consistently Marxist and revolutionary attitude towards the national struggle of the African people for land and freedom, nor to overcome entirely the traces of its origin within the white labour movement. Considering the inevitable limitations imposed on the pioneers of the I.S.L. by its own history, the remarkable thing is not these relative failures but that it progressed as far as it did. Many currents – pacifist, anarchist, syndicalist and others – were present at its inception and throughout its existence. It is true that a revolutionary Marxist tendency was also present and came to be the dominant force, but even then it was for the most part a partial and distorted concept of Marxism that reached our country.

When the International Socialist League broke away from the Labour Party it was joined by the Socialist Labour Party, which had long been devotedly advocating the version of Marxism propagated by organisations of the same name in Britain and the United States, and expounded in the writings of Daniel De Leon. These ideas were the predominent influence in the I.S.L., filling the ideological vacuum which had hitherto existed.

De Leon, who died in 1914, was a tireless and brilliant propagandist and populariser of what he understood to be Marxism. He mercilessly denounced the right-wing leaders of the labour movement and the craft unions – Lenin quoted approvingly his lethal description of them as 'Labour Lieutenants of the capitalist class.' His ideas exerted a powerful revolutionary influence in most English-speaking countries, inspiring the formation of the militant 'Industrial Workers of the World' (the 'Wobblies') whose remarkable rise left an enduring mark on American labour history, and at one stage winning adherents of the calibre of Tom Mann and Willie Gallacher in Britain, James Connolly in Ireland, and 'Big Bill' Heywood in the United States.

Yet his was a distorted version of Marxism. Dogmatic and sectarian in tendency, 'De Leonism' found its expression in the denunciation of all types of parliamentary political activity and an appeal to boycott craft and trade unions. The formation of 'one big Industrial Union' and the subsequent calling of a general strike was the panacea for the winning of workers' power and the overthrow of capitalism.

William Z. Foster, veteran leader of the Communist Party of the United States, commented that 'few men have made a greater impression on the American labour movement than Daniel De Leon, able and eloquent speaker, clever reasoner and dominant personality. But despite his brilliance he was essentially a sophist and a utopian.' And in his *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain* (p. 18) James Klugmann writes: 'De Leonism was the essential outlook of the Socialist Labour Party (a predecessor of the C.P.G.B.) right up to World War I. The British Socialist Party remained in the grip of De Leonism right up to the war when under the influence of Tom Bell and Arthur MacManus it began to broaden its political outlook.'

The extent of this theoretical current were revealed in the report presented by Jones, on behalf of the I.S.L., to the Comintern in 1921.* Describing the foundation of the League, he wrote:

> 'The anti-war section (of the Labour Party) broke away and with the co-operation of what were called the S.L.P. men (Comrades like John Campbell and Rabb) who propagated the principles of Marxism as propagated by De Leon, formed the International Socialist League.'

**Communism in South Africa* by David Ivon Jones. Presented to the Executive of the Third International on behalf of the International Socialist League of South Africa. Johannesburg, 1921.

Jones, indeed, wrote of the I.S.L. as 'having been captured by the De Leonites'. In the same report he explained the influence of these ideas on the turning of I.S.L. activities towards organising the African workers:

> Imbued with the ideas of De Leon as popularised in the splendid series of Marxian pamphlets issued by the S.L.P. of America and Great Britain, the League proclaimed the principle of Industrial Unionism . . . Craft unions were declared odious as dividing the workers instead of uniting them on the larger basis of industry. And as part of this craft disunity the exclusion of the native workers from part or lot in the Labour Movement was denounced as a crime . . .

At the same time Jones showed that already by 1921 the I.S.L. was realising the limitations of De Leonism. He continued:

'To us, the rather mechanical formula of De Leon's Industrial Unionism (which was deemed capable of performing a bloodless revolution by a "lockout of the capitalist class") was made a living thing by its application to the native workers.'

Nevertheless, similar syndicalist concepts remained within the Communist Party for many years after its foundation; echoes of their approach and phraseology appear in many documents and journals. Jones's participation in the Communist International and his study of Lenin's writings was a revelation to him of the breadth and flexibility of truly revolutionary Marxist approaches and tactics, far-removed from the arid sectarianism of the Socialist Labour Parties, which regarded every movement for partial reforms as treachery and every struggle other than a 'pure working class' one as a useless diversion. In his last letter written to W. H. Andrews from Yalta (13 April 1924) he wrote approvingly of the South African Young Communist League's campaign to improve conditions for apprentices:

> What a long chalk this is from the old S.L.P. hatred of all 'reform' . . . we are learning how to combine the struggle for reforms with the revolutionary struggle, or rather how to make the struggle for reforms revolutionary. I have just been reading one of Lenin's early brochures of 1902, where he declares that the political struggle of the working class is not exclusively a struggle for the economic betterment of the workers, but also a struggle in which the party of the workers enters in defence of every oppressed section, even non-worker sections, of society. For example he cited the call to the workers to demonstrate against the Czar drafting . . . students into the army. A positive attitude on every issue!

A deathblow to De Leonite survivals and all other dogmatic and sectarian distortions in the Communist movement in South Africa and throughout the world was struck by the publication in 1920 of Lenin's pamphlet '*"Left-Wing" Communism – an Infantile Disorder*'. This peerless exposition of revolutionary flexibility in tactics, combined with the utmost firmness of principle, cut the ground beneath the feet of all romantic exponents of 'ultra-revolutionariness' – though no

doubt, as the author foresaw, such tendencies will always rise again within each revolutionary movement.

The National Question

Thus the formation of the Communist Party as a section of the Communist International marked a qualitative change, the beginning of a radical transformation in every aspect of the Party's ideology, character and organisation.

In no sphere was the impact of the international communist movement, and especially of Lenin's contribution to it, more dynamic and far reaching than in its effect on the Party's understanding of the national and colonial question, and its application to our country.

Undoubtedly Lenin's thinking opened up an entire new dimension of Marxist theory on this issue in the age of modern imperialism, monopoly capitalism. Within Tsarist Russia, that 'prison-house of nations', Lenin had ever been the most ardent fighter against national discrimination, and against those within the labour movement who condoned it, even when they hid behind 'leftist' and 'internationalist' phrases.

> 'Whoever does not recognise and champion the equality of nations and languages, and does not fight against all national oppression or inequality, is not a Marxist; he is not even a democrat'

he wrote scathingly (Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 28). In the tradition of Marx and Engels, especially in their writings on Irish independence, he and the Bolshevik Party which he led proclaimed the right of all oppressed nations to self-determination – 'i.e., the right to secede and form independent states.'

During the first world war Lenin completed his detailed analysis of modern imperialism (*Imperialism – the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*)*

Defining modern imperialism as the period of the merging of finance and industrial capital into vast national and supra-national monopolies, Lenin showed how this era brought forth the most extreme contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The whole world was carved up into empires by a handful of imperialist super-powers, who then vied with one another to redivide it on terms more favourable to themselves.

From this penetrating analysis, Lenin drew far-reaching conclusions. While imperialism, greatly exacerbated the contradictions within, and between the imperialist countries, it had at the same time spread racialist ideas and won over to the support of colonialism an influential upper section of the workers, allowing them a share of the super-profits

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*It is interesting here to note that he made use of and acknowledged the work of the British economist J. A. Hobson author of *Imperialism – A Study* (London, 1902), based largely on studies he had made for his earlier work, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900).

extracted from cheap labour and resources in the colonies. Hence the opportunism which had destroyed the Second International.

At the same time, colonialist disruption of the traditional way of life and economies of the colonial peoples had brought into being an immensely important new factor in the world revolutionary movement: the national liberation movements in the colonies. Contesting the conventional view prevalent in the Second International that this movement was of small or secondary importance, Lenin wrote:

> But this is not so. It (the national liberation movement) has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century. Millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will perhaps play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 481-482).

Lenin's remarkable foresight established the theoretical basis for the alliance of the revolutionary working class and national liberation movements on a world scale, so notable a feature of our times. But his ideas were put forward at a time when the imperialist powers still held firm and apparently stable domination over practically the whole of Asia and Africa, and it was many years before they were fully understood or developed in South Africa, or even for that matter in the Communist International itself.

Certainly, that these ideas had begun to penetrate and be discussed by the International Socialist League even before the formation of the Communist Party is evidenced by a striking passage in Jones's 1921 report to the Comintern, following a brief description of the African National Congress: *'Here is a revolutionary movement in the fullest meaning of Lenin's term.'*

True the entire passage is disappointingly short (less than a single page out of twenty) and disparaging. Congress is described as a 'small coterie of educated natives', 'satisfied with agitation for civil equality and political rights', with no inkling of the enormous revolutionary significance of these rights in a country such as South Africa. The A.N.C. is contrasted unfavourably with the Industrial Workers' of Africa, and the report predicts that 'the growing class organisations of the natives will soon dominate or displace the Congress.'

Yet considering the times and conditions, the truly significant factor was not that the I.S.L. and the pioneers of the Communist movement in South Africa made errors of analysis and emphasis, arising out of the limitations of their origin and outlook. It was the extent to which — with the fraternal assistance of the world Communist movement and the inspiration of Lenin's ideas, the Party was able to transcend these

limitations to become the advanced spearhead of the South African working class as a whole; the pace-setter in the building of the united front of liberation, centred in the African National Congress; the front-rank detachment of the national democratic revolution.

In this process of transformation, the establishment on July 30 1921 of the united Party of South African Communists, as a section of the Communist International, was a nodal and essential turning point.

3

THE TURN TO THE MASSES

A year after the end of the European war, in August 1919, General Botha who had been Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa since its inception in 1910, died. General Smuts who had been out of the country for three and a half years, serving on Lloyd George's 'Imperial War Cabinet' and representing South Africa at Versailles and the establishment of the League of Nations, returned as Prime Minister.

Like the rest of the capitalist world, South Africa was in the grip of the post-war economic crisis. Radical ideas and actions given impetus by the October Revolution were spreading among the various strata of the population. The African National Congress had begun a new drive to arouse the people against oppression. The I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) had started its eventful history with a strike of dockers at Cape Town and historic strikes of African miners and municipal workers had broken out on the Rand. The white workers, too, were fighting back against the moves of the employers and their government to cut their living standards.

The reaction of the government was one of ruthless repression. Smuts's orders to the police were 'Don't hesitate to shoot.' A series of bloody massacres followed.

In October 1920 Samuel Masabalala the leader of the ICU in Port Elizabeth was arrested, and a great crowd of demonstrators gathered

outside the police station to demand his release. The police opened fire. Twenty-three people were killed and 123 wounded.

In May 1921, at Bulhoek, an African location near Queenstown in the Cape Province, an African separatist Church ('The Israelites') had set up their headquarters, and rejected a police demand that they disperse.

A massive military force armed with modern weapons (they numbered 800 compared with 500 'Israelites') was sent to Bulhoek. They opened fire against the 'enemy' – some of whom were said to have had assegais and knobkerries. 'When the firing was over 163 Israelites lay dead and 129 lay wounded on the field. Casualties on the government side amounted to one trooper wounded and one horse killed.' (W. K. Hancock: *Smuts*, Vol II p. 89). The Bulhoek massacre aroused a storm of protest. The ANC denounced it as 'a pogrom.' The Communist Party in Cape Town issued a leaflet headed: 'MURDER! MURDER! MURDER! THE BULHOEK MASSACRE.' for which three of the leaders (W. Dryburgh, D. Dryburgh and W. Harrisson) were arrested and charged with issuing an 'offensive, rebellious and libellous lampoon'.

At about the same time a horrified world learnt of Smuts's ruthless suppression of the alleged 'Bondelswarts rebellion' in Namibia (South West Africa). This Coloured community, which had valiantly resisted German domination, protested against the League of Nations decision to hand over the country as a 'mandate' to be administered by the Union of South Africa. They demanded self-determination and independence.

A virtual state of war was declared against this small people. Bombing planes were brought from Pretoria. They raided on Sunday, 29 May 1922 and the following day killing men, women and children, cattle and sheep. The Bondelswarts continued to fight a guerilla war into June, but the air power, artillery, modern machine guns and rifles of the enemy overpowered them. The official casualties were given (apart from women and children) as Bondelswarts: 150 men killed in action; government forces: 2.

The 1922 Strike

The world post-war economic crisis of the twenties had begun to hit the British and South African monopoly bourgeoisie in their most sensitive point and stronghold – the goldmines. In 1919 they were selling gold on the world market for 130s. per fine ounce. In November 1921 the price fell to 104s, and in December to 95s. The Chamber of Mines, seeking to avoid a fall in their profits, or a closing of the low-grade mines which the higher price had made it profitable to open, resolved upon a policy of lowering labour costs. It was impossible to reduce any further the miserable pay of the African miners, forced to work at rates below subsistence level. They were paying twice as much in total to

white workers numbering a fraction of the Africans. The 1921 figures were:

	Number Employed	*Annual Wage*
Whites	21,455	£10,640,521
Africans	179,987	£5,964,528

Chamber of Mines: *32nd Annual Report*, pp. 219-221

The Chamber accordingly decided to cut the cost of white labour by reducing the proportion of white to black workers, transferring some semi-skilled jobs to Africans at lower rates of pay.

In protest the miners came out on what developed into a general strike involving the entire white working class of the Witwatersrand, with far-reaching political demands and consequences. The South African Industrial Federation accused the Smuts government of 'backing the present attack of the employers on the white workers,' and called on workers to back the Labour and Nationalist Parties. The strike was to continue for three months, involving bloody clashes between the workers and the military forces. On 9 March Smuts issued mobilisation orders for the Active Citizen Force, and declared martial law, asserting that the country was faced by 'an insurrection'.

The bourgeois press called it 'the Red Revolt.' Smuts told his Parliament (19 March 1923) that 'the aim of the Rand Revolutionaries was to establish a sort of Soviet Republic'.

It was nothing of the sort. The organised white miners were striking against the introduction of 'unqualified' (i.e. African) workers into certain skilled jobs which they had hitherto monopolised.

The workers, mindful of Smuts's liking for violence to suppress strikes, formed 'commandos' for self-defence, but most of the generals were Afrikaner nationalists. The commandos were set up essentially for peaceful picketing and maintaining discipline among the strikers. The truth is that Smuts deliberately provoked a showdown. It was not until the proclamation of martial law and the massive intervention of troops as strike-breakers that clashes took place between the workers and the armed forces of the state.

The fighting was brief and bloody. The state armed forces used bombing aircraft, artillery, tanks, armoured trains, machine guns and rifles before the commandos were defeated and the strike broken. The subsequent 'Martial Law Commission of Enquiry' reported that 153 had been killed (including 43 soldiers and 29 policemen,) and 687 injured (including 176 soldiers and 115 police.) The white trade unionists (in *The Story of a Crime* issued by The Transvaal Strike Legal Defence Committee in 1924) later estimated the losses as 'over 250 lives and thousands wounded.' Over 1,000 strikers and their leaders, including all the Communist leaders, were arrested. Four workers were sentenced to death for alleged murders committed during the strike. Three of them, Long, Hull and Lewis, were executed on 17 November. They marched to the gallows singing 'The Red Flag.' Among the

martyrs of labour who died on active service were many Communists and other socialist militants, including two members of the Council of Action – the true vanguard of the strike movement – P. Fisher and H. Spendriff.

Smuts had broken the strike. But he had aroused a storm of hatred against his government and the imperialist forces behind him, which was to sweep him from office at the next election.

The 1922 strike faced the Communists with complex problems. They had campaigned for years against racialism and for unity of the workers, black and white.

The issue upon which the Chamber of Mines had precipitated the strike was the very one most certain to split the workers and rouse antagonism on both sides. Nor – though the Chamber's motive was merely to make bigger profits by more intensive exploitation of black labour – could it be denied that the colour bar was in itself indefensible.

The Communist Party in issuing a Manifesto* offering its assistance to the Strike Committee, felt it necessary to add that it did so *'without necessarily identifying itself with every slogan heard in the strike* . . . convinced that essentially this is a fight against the capitalist class'. The reservation was clearly related to the slogan 'for a White South Africa' frequently used by the strikers. Bill Andrews, the most prominent of the militants, had written to a friend when the strike broke out, 'My private opinion is that it will inevitably be lost; it is . . . impossible for the white workers in South Africa permanently to keep the natives out of any form of industry they are capable of undertaking'.

Yet the Party could not take a detached view. The great majority of its members were within the existing movement of white labour; they felt they could not stand aside from a major clash between their fellow-workers and the major imperialist concentration in the country, backed by the hated Smuts government. The Party and its members, though a small minority of the workers, set an example of militancy throughout the strike; they were a strong influence on the Council of Action which, when the right-wingers of the Industrial Federation wavered and were on the point of surrender, virtually took over the leadership at a crucial stage.

It was above all the Communist Party which ceaselessly hammered home to the strikers that the enemy was the Chamber of Mines and the government, not their African fellow-workers.

Yet at no stage did the Party, absorbed in the stormy progress of the strike, turn its attention to the African workers who remained in their compounds and continued operating the mines. It did not propose that they be given skilled work at equal rates of pay; nor did it advance

*See Appendix III

demands around which they could organise. These ommissions cannot be ascribed only to the objective conditions, but also to the inadequate theoretical analysis made at the time.

The Party was bitterly disappointed in the results and consequences of the strike. Despite the sacrifices and heroism of the Communists, it was not to them but to the chauvinist Labour and Nationalist Parties that the white workers turned, in their anger and bitterness against Smuts and his Party, which went down to defeat in the next election.

Many trade union militants left the Communist Party, to throw their weight behind the Labour-Nationalist Party alliance. Ivon Jones, who though in the last pangs of his fatal illness had continued to follow closely the fortunes of the movement from his sanitorium in Yalta, wrote in his last letter (to W. H. Andrews, 13 April 1924): 'We have lost the trade unionists . . . As a cold matter of fact there is no room for a C.P. in white South Africa except as the watchdog of the native . . .'

The white workers were able to win, through their voting rights, the demands they had been unable to assert through militant strike action. That too was a Pyrrhic victory. As the Communist Party was to comment looking back on the events of 1922 with the experience of forty years:

> If 1922 was the higher water mark of white labour in South Africa, it was also its greatest and *decisive defeat* as a force independent of the bourgeoisie. As the more far-sighted of the I.S.L. leaders had foreseen, there was no sort of future for a labour movement on this sort of parasitical basis. From 1922 onwards, the purely 'white' labour movement in this country was transformed step by step into an emasculated adjunct of the boss class, exchanging their independence for concessions and privileges, the price of their support for white imperialism in its brutal oppression and exploitation of the African people. (*After Forty Years*, S.A.C.P., 1961.)

Parallel with the decline of the established unions, mainly of skilled white workers which had hitherto constituted the 'labour movement', the early twenties witnessed the spectacular growth of a new type of workers' organisation, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (the I.C.U.).

The Rise of the I.C.U.

The I.C.U. was founded as a national organisation at a national conference of African trade unions held at Bloemfontein in 1920, with the support of the African National Congress and the Communist Party. Prime movers were Clements Kadalie, who had organised the I.C.U. in the Cape from 1919, when it organised an effective strike among the dockers, and Selby Msimang, pioneer of working class organisation in the A.N.C.

Without the advantage of voting rights, and with the labour and other laws heavily weighted against them, the African and Coloured workers and farm labourers made spectacular advances in organisation

under the banner of the I.C.U. As at Port Elizabeth, the I.C.U. more than once faced violence from police and white hooligans. In 1925 at Bloemfontein there were five deaths among about 60 casualties in one such clash. Its leaders frequently faced imprisonment and deportation. Nevertheless, the I.C.U. grew into a massive force in a very short period of time, spreading from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London to Natal, inland to the Free State and the Transvaal, and even beyond the Union's borders to Namibia, Rhodesia, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Hardly a town or dorp but had its I.C.U. branch.

The general secretary, Clements Kadalie came to the Cape from Malawi in 1918. A mission-trained teacher, he had no knowledge or experience of the trade union and labour movement, and could speak no African language used in South Africa. He depended a great deal upon the enthusiastic support and assistance of experienced trade unionists and others, many of them Communists. Already in 1917 the I.S.L. had started the Industrial Workers' of Africa (I.W.A.) as an all-in 'general union'. The I.W.A. worked closely with the I.C.U. from the start and soon merged with it. Communists such as E. J. Khaile, J. La Guma, John Gomas, and de Norman helped to build the I.C.U. in a few years from a few hundred members in Cape Town to a massive organisation numbering a quarter of a million members and with an income estimated at £15,000 a year.

The I.C.U. owed much of its popularity to the fact that it never confined itself to immediate economic questions facing the workers of a given industry or region; but boldly tackled the burning political problems agitating the minds of the oppressed people as a whole. The preamble to the I.C.U. constitution evidenced its class conscious and socialist inspiration:

> Whereas the interests of the workers and those of the employers are opposed to each other, the former living by selling their labour, receiving for it only part of the wealth they produce; and the latter living by exploiting the labour of the workers; depriving the workers of a part of the product of their labour in the form of profit, no peace can be between the two classes, a struggle must always obtain about the division of the products of human labour until the workers through their industrial organisations take from the capitalist class the means of production, to be owned and controlled by the workers for the benefit of all, instead of for the profit of a few. Under such a system he who does not work, neither shall he eat. The basis of remuneration shall be the principle, from every man according to his abilities, to every man according to his needs.

The I.C.U. reached out to the rural masses, taking up their demand for land and recruiting tens of thousands of peasants, including a number of chiefs.

More Reaction

Following the defeat of the miners, the Smuts government continued its reactionary drive against all sections of the working people.

Contrary to popular belief, especially in Britain, General Smuts was an ardent upholder of white supremacy. In a 1917 address in London, he had laid down the basis of his 'native policy' in terms which would satisfy the most ardent apologist for apartheid in the present day. He supported 'parallel institutions' . . . 'Instead of mixing up black and white . . . we are now trying to lay down a policy of keeping them apart . . . in land ownership, settlement and forms of government . . .' There would be separate areas for blacks 'where they will govern themselves in all their forms of living and developing.'

In 1923, as Minister of Native Affairs, an office which he combined with the Premiership, Smuts introduced the first installment of his plan to implement this apartheid policy – the Native (Urban Areas) Act. This racialist law remains to this day one of the foundation stones of South Africa's structure: it provides that every urban area must segregate Africans in 'locations' (ghettos); regulate the entry of Africans through a registration system; instals autocratic location superintendants whose word is law in these areas; provides for the 'endorsement out' of 'surplus natives' in accordance with the principle that 'the Native should only be allowed to enter urban areas . . . when he is willing to enter and minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister.'

One of the last measures adopted by the Smuts administration was the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. It provided legal recognition for trade unions, but the price for this concession was the laying down of cumbersome and protracted proceedings without which strikes would be illegal. By far the worst provision of this law was its definition of the word 'employee' which excluded 'pass-bearing natives' thus making sure that the great majority of the population were excluded from the right to form legally-recognised trade unions. Natal Indians were also excluded, and further anti-Indian measures were under active preparation.

The Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914 had promised that no further discriminatory measures would be taken without consultation with the Indian community. This undertaking was breached by the Transvaal Asiatic Land and Trading Amendment Act of 1919 which united the whole Indian community against it. Previously they had been organised on a provincial basis – the Natal Indian Congress, having been founded in 1894. The first Conference of the South African Indian Congress was held in Cape Town in January 1919.

By 1924, in the face of world-wide opposition, a new major assault on the Indians' rights was under way.

The Smuts government submitted vicious new anti-Indian measures to the House of Assembly. The debate was interrupted by the dissolution of Parliament and the General Election of 1924.

Smuts had become the darling of the British establishment, who had loaded him with honours as a 'great world statesman.' This exalted opinion was hardly shared by his fellow-countrymen, of all races. Even among the white voters the tide was running strongly against him. The South African Party (S.A.P.) lost one by-election after another. In 1922 it had a parliamentary majority of twenty-two. By 1922 it had fallen to thirteen and by 1923 to eleven. By April 1924 it was down to eight. Clearly it could not last long.

Scenting a chance for office, the leaders of the Afrikaner nationalists and the white workers, the Nationalist and Labour Parties, began to sound out measures to unite against the common enemy, and to sink, at least for the time being, their differences. These differences were not so deep as might be supposed.

Since the breach with Andrews and the internationalists in 1915, the Labour Party, under the leadership of Creswell, had moved even more to the Right. The departure of the left wind had relieved Creswell about any inhibitions he may have had about airing his racialist policies of privileges for 'White Labour' and segregation of Africans.

Nor was the Nationalist Party's somewhat half-hearted Republicanism a barrier to co-operation by the Labour Party. In 1915, at a time when most of the white workers were British immigrants they had split the Labour Party as last-ditch defenders of the Empire. By 1922, at any rate in the Transvaal, the majority of the white miners were Afrikaners who had flooded in from the countryside and who cared little for Britain and less for the Empire.*

The rapid development of capitalism in the Union was dividing the Afrikaners along class lines. The Land Act and other measures to proletarianise the Africans had benefited a section of the farmers; they produced cash crops for the booming urban centres and became rich men. They had no reason for dissatisfaction with the deal which 'Slim Jannie' Smuts had struck with imperialism. But the same process destroyed the semi-patriarchal, self-contained economy of Boer agriculture. The successful farmers bought out or squeezed out those less successful.

The world depression that followed in 1914-18 war, saw the development of a new phenomenon — the 'poor whites', landless farmers mainly Afrikaners, eking out a living as *bywoners* or share-croppers, or flocking to the towns to seek work on the mines or in industry, no better off in education or training than the non-whites with whom they competed for jobs, but with the valuable advantage of a 'white' skin — and with it the vote.

*In February 1922 mass meetings of strikers on the East Rand and in Johannesburg carried enthusiastic resolutions calling on the Nationalist and Labour Parties to end 'the domination of the Chamber of Mines and other financiers' and 'proclaim a South African Republic.'

These developments provided a mass basis for the Afrikaner nationalist movement, whose political expression was the Nationalist Party (Nasionale Party) headed by another Boer War General, J. B. M. Hertzog.

Typically petty-bourgeois the Nationalist Party vacillated between capital and labour. As the 'small man's party' it demagogically denounced Smuts as a paid agent of the Chamber of Mines and vowed to free South Africa from 'capitalist domination'. The Labour Party's occasional and unconvincing professions of socialism by no means terrified the leaders of nationalist Afrikanerdom in those days. 'Do not let us be afraid of Bolshevism,' Hertzog had told his Party congress (November 1919). 'Bolshevism is the will of the people to be free. Why do people want to suppress and kill Bolshevism? Because national freedom means death to capitalism and imperialism'. And the editor of *Die Burger*, Hertzog's close associate, Dr. D. F. Malan, was reported at a public meeting at the same period: 'The Bolshevists stand for freedom, just like the Nationalist Party.'

The sensitivity of the Nationalist politicians to the mood of their public had resulted in the steady rise of the Party. Beginning in 1914 with five M.P.'s it became the main opposition party in 1920 with 44 seats, compared with 21 for the Labour Party, and 69 for Smuts and his supporters. In the post-war years of economic depression and political radicalism the Nationalist Party was quite prepared to compete with the Labour Party in 'socialist' demagogy.

Most of the leading figures of the Nationalist and Labour Parties stood prudently away from the strife and bloodshed of the 1922 'Rand Revolt'. But they did express in Parliament their sympathy for the workers' cause and their outrage at the brutal reaction of the government. It came as no surprise to anyone inside or outside the country when, in 1923, Hertzog and Creswell entered into negotiations.

They reached a working agreement on cooperation between the Nationalist and Labour Parties not to split the anti-government vote — i.e. not to put up opposing candidates for election: a decision hailed by *Die Burger* as the portent of the downfall of Smuts and 'of capitalist domination in South Africa'.

Revulsion against the terrorist actions of the Smuts government, rather than any confidence that the Nationalist – Labour Pact would seriously challenge colonialism or improve their lot, governed the reaction of the democratic organisations towards the Pact. National conferences of the A.N.C. and the I.C.U. both expressed the demand for a 'change of government'.

The Communist Party's reaction to the election pact was one of qualified approval: it had small confidence in either Party. *The International* (April 27, 1923) called it an 'alliance between bourgeois nationalism and labour imperialism,' but added:

Notwithstanding . . . the obvious insincerity of the whole arrange-

ment we recognise that a general assault on the Smuts-Chamber of Mines Combination must be made.

Whether a purely Nationalist or a Nationalist-Labour government came into office, it continued:

> the workers will rapidly discover that the administration of the country will not be materially different to that at the present time. New groupings will inevitably take place. Clever maneouvering by party leaders and wirepullers cannot for long obscure the essential fact of modern society – the antagonism between the exploiting and the exploited classes. The rank and file of both the Labour and Nationalist parties must sooner or later refuse to follow their bourgeois leaders, and will form a real workers party, not to be side-tracked either by British imperialism nor bourgeois republicanism, but organised, drilled and determined to unceasingly work for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

The confidence in and focus upon the revolutionary potential of the white workers implicit in this passage was not justified by events.

At the 1923 national conference of the Party it had been decided to apply for affiliation to the Labour Party. This decision was taken in the belief that it was in accordance with the policy of the Communist International to work for a united workers' front against the capitalist offensive. Supporters of the motion pointed to the similar decision taken by the Communist Party of Great Britain in regard to the Labour Party in that country. Such an analogy did not take into account the fundamental distinction between the two Parties. The British Labour Party really was, however misled, an organisation of the workers of the country. Its South African counterpart spoke for the privileged white minority of the workers alone and its strategic aim was to consolidate their privileges and their status as a section of the racial oligarchy.

The S.A. Labour Party rejected the C.P. application for affiliation, just as after the electoral defeat of Smuts it disregarded the Communists' appeals and warnings and accepted office as junior partners in Hertzog's Coalition Cabinet.* So doing it virtually signed its death warrant as a workers' organisation with a policy independent of the capitalist class. The Labour Ministers, Creswell and Boydell, became accomplices in and initiators of a series of vicious racial measures against the non-white majority groups. The Labour Party itself steadily lost the confidence and support of the white workers, split into warring factions under Creswell and W. B. Madeley, and never again featured as a significant independent factor in the politics of White South Africa.

The 1924 Party Conference

The significance of these events, foreshadowing the absorption of the

*With 63 seats against 53 for the S.A.P., the Nationalist Party needed the backing of the 18 Labour members for a stable majority. It therefore offered the SALP two seats in an eight-man Cabinet.

white workers as junior partners in the racialist establishment, no less than the growth in numbers and ilitancy of the African working class, strengthened the influence of those within the Communist Party who had long emphasised the priority of work among the indigenous masses.

Many members questioned the weight and emphasis which continued to be given to Communist work among the white workers.

A full-scale debate took place at the third national conference of the Party at the end of 1924. The central issue was a motion that a fresh approach be made to the Labour Party for affiliation.

The leading opponents of this proposal, S. P. Bunting, E. R. Roux and others, were known to be firm advocates of the Party's need to concentrate on work among the Africans. In rejecting the affiliation proposal the Conference implicitly supported their view. A resolution of the Conference declared that the Party

> Stresses the prime importance of mass organisation of labour . . . It aims at forwarding the industrial organisation of ALL sections of the workers, especially those hitherto unorganised . . . the problems of the working class can only be solved by a United Front of all workers *irrespective of colour.*

The terms of the resolution were not new, but the emphasis was. It was a turn in the direction of Party work reflected also in the election of Bunting as Chairman and Roux as Vice-Chairman of the Party. Though it was long before the Party was to generalise the significance of the break with the past in theoretical terms, it was a real turning-point, and resulted in shifts of leadership. The older generation of trade unionists in particular found it difficult to adjust themselves to the emphasis upon work among Africans. Andrews, re-elected by Conference as General Secretary of the Party and editor of *The International,* resigned from both positions to concentrate on trade union work. He was replaced by Jimmy Shields (1900-1949), a young Scottish comrade who continued in leading positions until his return to Britain in 1927.

In an interview with *The Star* (27 February 1925) Bill Andrews denied that 'a split over principles existed in the party . . . A difference over tactics had led to his resignation from office'. He 'unequivocally supported the necessity of organising all workers regardless of colour' but 'disagreed with the emphasis and speed with which the new leadership of the Party proposed to tackle the job.'

Following the 1924 conference the Party devoted great efforts to organising the African workers, then being driven in their thousands from the countryside into industry. Under the direction of the Central Committee, members experienced in the trade union field directed their attention towards building African trade unions. Party schools were established in which, under the general direction of the veteran Communist T. W. Thibedi, a drive was launched against illiteracy and ignorance.

A considerable number of African workers and revolutionary intellectuals came into the Party at this time. Many of these recruits

were to play an outstanding role in the future of the liberation movement, the trade union movement and the Party. Among them were Albert Nzula (1906-1933), Moses M. Kotane, J. B. Marks, E. T. Mofutsanyana, Johannes Nkosi, Gana Makabeni, Josie Mpama, and many others.

'Civilised Labour' Policy

It was a period in which the Pact Government, with its election promises of 'aiding capitalist domination' was in fact fortifying it, though seeking some concessions for the Afrikaner bourgeoisie. State monopoly capitalist industries developed apace.

As a junior partner in this process, the S. A. Labour Party succeeded only in discrediting itself.

It was the senior partner, the Nationalist Party, which consolidated its strength and support. This was attained, without any major challenge or confrontation with the dominant power of monopoly capitalism, through a series of ferocious attacks on the living standards and remaining rights of the African, Coloured and Indian people.

Hertzog lost no time. At the end of 1924 he issued a notorious circular instructing all government departments to substitute 'civilised' (i.e., white) workers for others 'wherever practical'. This was designed to shift the burden of unemployment on to the shoulders of the non-white workers, and had the effect of throwing thousands of Africans out of their jobs in the state-owned railways and elsewhere in favour of untrained whites at higher rates of pay.

It was soon followed by Creswell's Wage Act (1925) which applied the same principle of discrimination in pay and employment to privately-owned enterprises, and the 'Colour Bar Act' (Mines and Works Amendment Act, 1926) which made it illegal to employ Africans in a wide variety of skilled and semi-skilled jobs on the mines. In 1927 Parliament adopted the Native Administration Act to tighten up and extend the system of state control over the lives and movements of Africans, place them outside the common law, and convert tribal chiefs into instruments of state policy. This law also made it a crime to 'promote hostility between Natives and Europeans'. In the peculiar terminology of South Africa this was meant to apply not to the customary incitements against African, Coloured and Indian people by white politicans, but to protests against racial discrimination.*

The coalition Government also began a fresh attack against the Indian population of South Africa with the object not only of imposing a series of segregationist measures against them, but even expelling them from the country to India. These 'repatriation' and other discriminatory measures met with stiff resistance from the Indian

*The first victims were three Cape Town Communists, S. Silwana, J. Gomas and B. Ndobe, jailed for a protest against the shooting of an African by a white policeman.

community, and even from the colonial administration of India. They were the subject of a series of 'round-table conferences' between South Africa and India.

A further series of sweeping segregation measures was put forward in the 'Hertzog Bills' (1926). The right of African voters in the Cape Province to vote on the common roll was to be abolished in favour of a 'General Native Council', under the white parliament and the addition of seven 'Native Representatives' to parliament – white men elected by chiefs and other selected Africans. At the same time, the reserve system would be consolidated under rural councils which foreshadowed Verwoerd's 'Bantustans'. A sop was offered to Coloured men who, as a part of this package deal, would be enfranchised in the northern provinces with the same qualifications as in the Cape.

United Resistance

The segregation plan evoked a greater measure of unity among the oppressed peoples of South Africa than ever before. The A.N.C. summoned a National Convention at Bloemfontein (February 1926) which rejected segregation in any form, demanded equal rights for all in the Union's constitution, and decided to boycott 'native conferences' called by the government. The I.C.U., and the Communist Party likewise uncompromisingly rejected the Hertzog Bills, and the Party called on African organisations to work for a general strike in protest against them.

In June 1926 the first Non-European Convention took place at Kimberley, attended by representatives of the A.N.C., the A.P.O., and various African welfare, religious and other bodies, as well as, for the first time in such a gathering, the South African Indian Congress.

The Convention rejected 'any policy of differentiation on grounds of colour or race,' and condemned the existing and proposed measures of the Hertzog government. It called for 'closer co-operation among the Non-European sections of South Africa.' The Convention served as a warning signal to the ruling classes. Hertzog's Bills were not proceeded with at that time.

Encouraging as it was, the move towards unity of the forces of resistance and change was not backed up by organisational cohesion and political clarity. Weaknesses in the various movements were seized upon by the enemy, which set to work – with the able assistance of 'liberal' capitalist circles in the country and international socia-democracy, to disrupt and undermine the people's organisations.

Tragically, their first major success was with the organisation upon which the working people had placed their greatest confidence – the I.C.U.

Right up to the end of 1926, statements in the ICU journal, The Workers' Herald, and pronouncements by its leading spokesman, Kadalie, retained their radical and progressive character. Its outlook was

all-African, internationalist and revolutionary. Kadalie's address to the 1925 ICU conference contained this passage:—

'We are aiming at the building up in Africa of a National Labour Organisation of the aboriginals, through which we shall break the wills of white autocracy. We must prevent the exploitation of our people on the mines and on the farms, and obtain increased wages for them. We shall not rest there. We will open the gates of the Houses of legislation, now under the control of white oligarchy, and from this step we shall claim equality of purpose with the white workers of the world to overthrow the capitalist system of Government and usher in a co-operative Commonwealth one, a system of Government which is not foreign to the aboriginal of Africa'. (Quoted in *The Workers' Herald*, vol. 1, no. 14, 15 May, 1925).

Despite rebuffs from the white trade union movement the ICU held firmly to its principle of working class unity.

Downfall of the I.C.U.

Yet at the end of 1926, Kadalie suddenly forced a split with the Communists, carried a resolution excluding Party members from holding office in the ICU, and veered sharply towards a policy of 'sensible, moderate' trade unionism, eschewing the radical political content which had drawn Africans to the organisation in their tens of thousands.

The new policy was disastrous. Within the next two years the ICU dwindled and split until virtually nothing was left of this mighty body of organised workers.

Following a protracted tour of Western Europe in 1927, sponsored by the Amsterdam-based anti-Communist International Federation of Trade Unions, Kadalie returned with a new Constitution, drafted by A. Creech-Jones and other British 'experts,' on the lines of their own T.U.C. This was followed by the arrival of a Scottish 'adviser,' W. Ballinger.

These attempts to transform the I.C.U. from a revolutionary workers' movement failed dismally. One internal split followed another.

A sharp clash developed between Kadalie and the leader of the I.C.U. in Natal, A. G. W. Champion, a man with as strong a character and as marked individualism as Kadalie himself. Natal, under Champion, broke away to form a separate organisation. Ballinger soon decided that the founder himself was unsuitable for his office: a further split took place with rival head-committees under the leadership of Ballinger and Kadalie. E. R. Roux has painfully and vividly described the last chapter of the story:

> Secretaries were bolting with cash, the union's furniture was being sold to pay lawyers' fees . . . The events which led up to the final tragedy were full of

drama and tragedy. Anarchy prevailed. Individual leaders competed for power. They fought to obtain control of the I.C.U. And as they fought the I.C.U. vanished before their eyes until there was nothing left to fight over.

(Time Longer Than Rope, p. 177.)

Many reasons have been advanced to explain the decline of the I.C.U: its formless and all-embracing structure, inhibiting close organisation and action on a factory or industrial basis; the weaknesses of Kadalie and other leaders, particularly the tendency to substitute revolutionary platform oratory for mass mobilisation and action; the intrigues of white liberals and the I.F.T.U.; Kadalie's fatal rift with the Communist Party and his misguided attempts to transform the organisation from a revolutionary organ of the masses into the sort of respectable and bureaucratic machine which had developed among the white workers and in Britain.

No doubt these were all factors of importance. But they tend to overlook the massive armoury of repression which the white establishment is ready to unleash against any African movement which constitutes a threat to the structure of power and profits. Much of the time and resources of the I.C.U. were absorbed by lengthy court proceedings following the arrest of its officials. I.C.U. meetings were surrounded by intimidation and violence from police and armed white hooligans acting in concert. Even its inner workings were subjected to penetration by informers and provactors. The politicians like Creswell and Hertzog, who had been prepared to encourage the I.C.U. when they were in opposition seeking support, turned bitterly hostile when installed in office as administrators of the mine-owners' and landowners' state. The white workers' Trade Union Congress found excuses to reject the I.C.U.'s application for affiliation, even though, with Bill Andrews as its general secretary, the T.U.C. itself was at that time under the most progressive leadership it ever had.

Against such formidable opposition the remarkable fact is not the failure but the achievements of the I.C.U. It made the voice of the voiceless and disinherited African masses heard, for once, in the land, including the white newspapers and parliament. It awakened revolutionary national and class consciousness among tens of thousands of African working people in town and country, brought to them their first lessons in organisation and unity. The I.C.U. awakened and mobilised many of the working class cadres of the Congress and trade union movements and the Communist Party for the stern struggles ahead.

It was these cadres who, following the disintegration of the I.C.U. set to work to organise industrial trade unions for African workers on sound and militant lines, and to build up the national liberation movement.

A.N.C. – C.P. Unity

The Communist Party's relationship with the African National Congress improved greatly in this period. J. J. Gumede, Congress president, who had strongly opposed 'Bolshevism' ten years before, had come to appreciate the courageous and principled stand of the Communists. As A.N.C. representative he attended the International Congress of the League Against Imperialism at Brussels, Belgium, in February 1927, together with James la Guma, representing the Communist Party, and Daniel Colraine of the S.A. Trade Union Congress.

President Gumede told this great international gathering of anti-imperialists, whose delegates included Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Madame Sun Yat-sen of China, of the bitter lot of the enslaved African people. Speaking of communism, he said:

> I am happy to say that there are Communists in South Africa. I myself am not one, but it is my experience that the Communist Party is the only party that stands behind us and from which we can expect something.

On his return to South Africa, he repeated the same point in his Presidential report to the A.N.C. annual conference in June 1927. 'Of all political parties,' he said, 'the Communist Party is the only one that honestly and sincerely fights for the oppressed people'.

The conference showed its confidence in Gumede and his militant policies by re-electing him as President-General for a further three-year term of office, with E. J. Khaile, who had been expelled from the I.C.U. for refusing to resign from the C.P., as general secretary.

President Gumede visited Moscow in 1927 to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution. He was deeply impressed by his travels in the Soviet Union. 'I have seen the new world to come, where it has already begun,' he said in Johannesburg. 'I have been to the new Jerusalem'.

The shift in the Party's emphasis had brought a very substantial access of membership, transforming the composition of the Party. From a minority in 1924, African Communists, by 1928, comprised the great majority – 1,600 out of 1,750 members.

This transformation, however, was not adequately reflected in the Party's leadership, policy and perspective. On the proposal of Shields that Africans should be drawn into the leadership, the fifth national conference had elected Makabeni, Khaile and Thibedi to the Central Committee, but the officials were all whites as was the delegation appointed to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in July 1928.

The Comintern Debate of 1928

The Congress was a notable one from the South African viewpoint. In addition to surveying international and, especially, colonial problems, it gave specific attention to our own country. This was the first time a discussion on South Africa had featured on a C.I. Congress

agenda. The discussion had been preceded by talks between the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.) and James La Guma, who had represented the C.P.S.A. at the celebration of the revolution, the previous November. He reported the gist of those discussions on his return. Subsequently the Party had an opportunity to study a draft resolution of the E.C.C.I. on South Africa and to mandate its delegation accordingly. That mandate was one of opposition to the new direction of policy proposed.

One of the main proposals of the E.C.C.I. was summed up in the slogan for South Africa – 'an Independent Native Republic – with full guarantees for minority groups – as a stage towards a workers' and peasants government'. To a large extent discussion of this question has tended to concentrate on the formulation of this slogan itself, without regard to the profound theoretical issues that were involved and which were debated at the Congress. Yet in their arguments against the C.I. approach the South African delegation, consisting of Sidney and Rebecca Bunting and Eddie Roux, brought out quite clearly the fundamental differences which existed between the international movement and its South African section.

These differences were not confined to a pragmatic assessment of the suitability of a particular slogan considered as a formula. They went to the heart of the ideological approach to the colonial and national question. Arguing the case for his Central Committee, S. P. Bunting as head of the delegation criticised the frequent practice of the C.I. in its documents of referring to the 'proletariat' of the capitalist countries and the 'masses' in the colonies. He contended that the distinction was incorrect, revealing a misunderstanding of the multi-class *alliance* required in the national-liberation struggle, and wrongly counterposing this to 'the class struggle'. The C.P.S.A. delegation insisted that class, not national, issues were uppermost in South Africa. 'Nationalist revolt' in Bunting's words, had 'not been on the part of the black workers but of the Dutch nationalists.' He agreed with the practical demands proposed by the Executive, for land for the Africans, equal rights and abolition of racial laws and land, but maintained that 'class struggle is more capable of accomplishing the same tasks'. 'The A.N.C. is a moribund body,' he declared. 'The Communist Party itself is the actual or potential leader of the native national movement'.

These arguments, reflecting as they did the majority view of the C.P.S.A.'s Central Committee at that time, were not acceptable to the Congress. The view was upheld that 'the national question, based on the agrarian question, lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa'.

The 1928 Congress of the Comintern summed up the majority opinion of the Parties in its thesis on 'The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies'. A section of this thesis discussed the position in the Union of South Africa. Here, it declared Africans, who

constitute the majority of the population, are being expropriated from the land by the white colonists and by the state, are deprived of political rights and freedom of movement, are subjected to the most brutal forms of racial and class oppression, and suffer simultaneously from pre-capitalist and capitalist methods of exploitation and oppression.

Noting that the Communist Party had 'achieved definite successes' among African workers, the resolution enjoined it to struggle

still more energetically for complete equality of rights, the abolition of special regulations and laws directed against Africans, and for confiscation of the land of the landlords.

In its trade union work the Party was called upon to organise African workers and 'struggle by all methods against racial prejudice in the ranks of the white workers and to eradicate entirely such prejudices from its own ranks'.

The Party must determinedly and consistently put forward the creation of an independent native republic, with simultaneous guarantees for the rights of the white minority, and struggle in deeds for its realisation.

This brief resolution was not, nor was it intended to be, a detailed analysis of the South African situation. But it did pinpoint and stress the very weaknesses in the work and propaganda of the Party until then, and the erroneous position expounded by its delegation at the Congress.

A more thorough explanation and elaboration of the viewpoint of the international communist movement was embodied in a special resolution on 'the South African Question' adopted by the Executive Committee of the C.I. later in the year, published in December 1928 and reproduced in Appendix V of the present volume.

No doubt many of the facts and formulations of this document need bringing up to date. But taken all in all it is a remarkable Marxist-Leninist appraisal of the fundamental structure of the character of South African society, whose aptness and relevance has been vindicated rather tham made obsolete by the passage of time. Its emphasis on the 'colonial type of the country', on the 'united white front for the exploitation of the native population', between British imperialism and the white South African bourgeoisie, foreshadow the Programme adopted by the South African Communist Party in 1962 with the benefit of thirty-years experience and study.

As a disciplined section of the Communist International, the Party in South Africa formally endorsed its decisions. At its seventh annual conference in 1929, the CPSA adopted a new programme approving the C.I. policy, though not without a good deal of opposition. The conference elected an executive with Bunting as chairman and including Albert Nzula as organiser and Johannes Nkosi. Elected as secretary was D. G. Wolton, a journalist from England, who had supported the Comintern's policy throughout and was sharply critical of the attitude of Bunting and others.

Nevertheless, both were appointed Party candidates in the general election of 1929, Wolton for the Cape Flats and Bunting for the rural constitutency of Tembuland, Transkei. Bunting's election campaign was a stormy one. Shadowed day and night by police, his meetings violently smashed up more than once by white hooligans, he and his agent, Gana Makebeni were faced with more than a dozen prosecutions. His reasoned and militant appeal to the rural African voters made a deep impression. Nevertheless intimidation had done its work. Both Communist candidates were defeated. Wolton left for a visit abroad after the election. He was succeeded by Albert Nzula, the first African to hold the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Depression and Repression

The Nationalist Party won the 1929 election with an absolute majority of M.P.'s in the white parliament, at a time when the capitalist world was entering a period of acute economic crisis.

Hertzog's recipe for the depression, unemployment and unrest was a new round of attacks on the voteless masses. He had won the election on a 'Black Menace' manifesto more extreme in chauvinism than ever. Its first effects were a race riot by whites in Durban, following a boycott of the municipal beerhall by Africans. On 17 June 1929, hooligans attacked the offices of the Natal I.C.U., a breakaway organisation led by A. W. G. Champion. The Africans fought back, and eight people were killed and 108 wounded when police joined the white rioters.

Oswald Pirow, Hertzog's Minister of Justice, (later an outspoken admirer of Hitler) followed up with a melodramatic show of force, marching police armed with machine guns and tear gas, in a massive tax-collecting raid on Durban Africans. He announced a 'Communist conspiracy' and brought in a new law — an amended version of the Riotous Assemblies Act — giving himself draconic powers to ban meetings and deport people from one area to another.

At the same time a renewed drive was made to oust Africans and other non-whites from their jobs to make way for the growing army of 'poor white' unemployed. When the workers protested against this and the Pirow law they were met with further repression and racial incitement. A series of protest meetings were called by the Communist Party on 16 December 1929. The meeting at Potchefstroom, addressed by J. B. Marks and Edwin Mofutsanyana, was disrupted by a gang of white hooligans, one of whom fired at the platform, fatally wounding a local comrade, Hermanus Lethebe.

The Communist Party worked hard to rally the masses against the new reactionary offensive. The Party journal, renamed *Umsebenzi* (in Zulu and Xhosa: 'The Worker') and carrying articles in several African languages, was reaching a bigger circulation than ever. Vigorous steps to build A.N.C. and Party branches and African trade unions in various

parts of the country were taken by militants such as Nzula, Kotane and Marks in the Transvaal, Nkosi in Durban, Dambuza in Bloemfontein, Gomas, Ngudlane, Ndobe and Tonjeni in the Western Cape.

The 1930 Pass-Burning Campaign

In 1930, the Communist Party issued a call for a united front campaign against the pass laws, designed to culminate in the burning of passes throughout the country on Dingane's Day, December 16: the anniversary of the battle between Zulu and Boer at Blood River.

Unfortunately, the call fell on deaf ears. Kadalie countered the Party's call with an appeal for a 'national day of prayer' instead of a day of struggle.

The African National Congress, too, had entered a period of temporary regression. The retiring President, Gumede opened its April 1930 national conference with a rousing appeal for militancy. He denounced imperialism and called on Africans to rally against any attack on the Soviet Union 'the only real friend of all subjected races.' He called on Congress to organise the people to fight for 'equal economic, social and political rights', for 'a South African Native Republic with equal rights for all, and free from all foreign and local domination.'

The call met with a warm response from militants and workers at the conference. But right-wing conservative elements had been organising against Gumede. They packed the conference and carried the day. Mahabane, Dube Selope Thema and other advocates of 'moderate' policies, secured the defeat of Gumede's candidature for re-election as President and the return of an executive, headed by Dr. Seme, by then advanced in years, and dominated by compromisers. Anxious to woo the South African Party — then in opposition, and promising opposition to Hertzog's anti-African measures — the A.N.C. leaders rejected the call for united action with the Communists.

Nevertheless the Communist Party continued alone with its Dingane's Day demonstrations. The greatest of these was in Durban, where in the face of fierce repression, the Party had made great strides under the leadership of Johannes Nkosi.

At this demonstration Johannes Nkosi was murdered by the South African police, together with three other African workers attending the demonstration. At the inquest seven witnesses swore that they had seen the chief constable shoot at Nkosi, who was arrested and then stabbed and beaten to death by the police. No policeman was ever tried or punished for this bloody crime.

Johannes Nkosi, born in 1905, was already a seasoned veteran of the trade union movement and the workers' struggle when he joined the Communist Party in 1926. Already, at the age of 19 he had taken part in the strike against the pass laws, led by the A.N.C. Coming to Johannesburg from the countryside, he had found work as a domestic

servant ('kitchen-boy' in white South African terminology) which led A. Nzula to head his last tribute to him with the words of Lenin: 'Every cook must learn to be an administrator'. Nzula wrote:

> An uncompromising fighter, he died as he lived, fearless and conscious of the great fight in which he was engaged, as his final message, short but characteristic shows. The message addressed, in Zulu: 'To the Workers of South Africa: Never, under the sun has a nation been so shackled with the chains of slavery. We are not even allowed to voice our opinion on the state of affairs in our Motherland. Why not awake and stand on our feet? Men, women and young women, we must support organisations that fight for our freedom'.
>
> A thousand Africans must take the place of Nkosi. Let his cowardly murderers know that the African Giant is awakening and nothing will stop his progress.
>
> Long live the name of Nkosi!
>
> Long live a Free Africa!

Following the Dingane's Day Murders, the Hertzog-Pirow government unleashed a storm of terror and repression in Durban and other Natal towns. The working class movement throughout the country was subjected to an unprecedented wave of repression.

Nevertheless the Communist Party, at a time when the national liberation movement was at a low ebb, courageously maintained its stand during the early thirties.

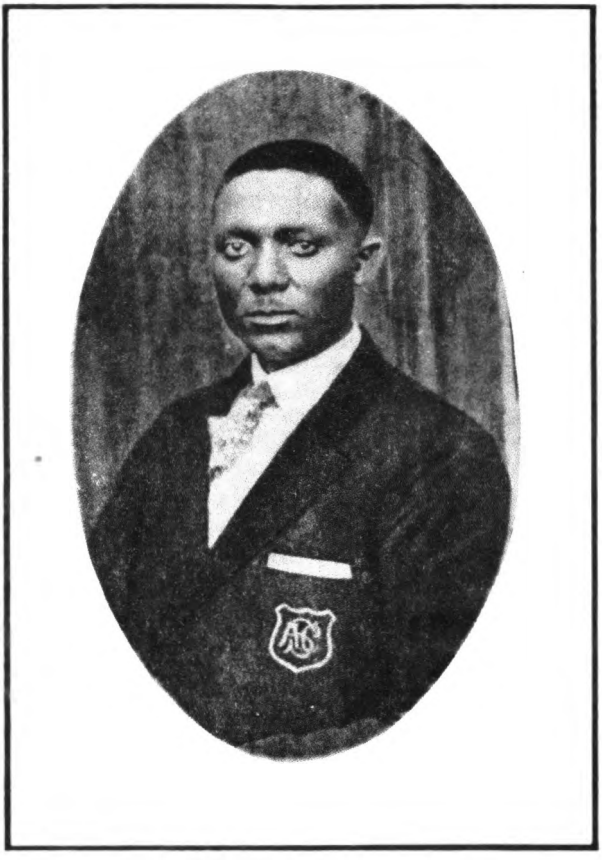
Unemployment was rising steeply as a result of the world depression, and the Party was in the vanguard of the movement to organise jobless workers to demand bread and 'work or wages'. May Day 1931 saw a rare example of united action by black and white workers in Johannesburg. A demonstration estimated at 2,000 Africans and 1,000 white workers, led by comrade I. Diamond, marched together through the city streets to the Rand Club, venue of the millionaires. There they marched in and demanded to be served with food. Violent fighting with the police followed, and Diamond was arrested and sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.

Another Reef town, Germiston, was also the scene of violent repression in 1932, when J. B. Marks was 'nominated' by the Communist Party as its candidate for Parliament. Naturally, as an African, Marks was not eligible to stand, but the Party used the occasion to dramatise the injustice of the whites-only constitution. It was made the occasion for a militant campaign for democratic rights and immediate demands such as the abolition of poll tax and lodgers' permits on Africans. Communists were arrested for 'incitement to racial hostility,' and repeated attacks on Party meetings were made by armed police and local white hooligans. Few leading and active Communists escaped imprisonment at that period, even though the Party enjoyed formal legality.

Unfortunately the thirties were also a period when the Communist Party itself was torn by internal strife of a sort which seriously

undermined its strength and influence without truly enlightening its path.

African Revolutionary Martyr.



Comrade J. W. NKOSI.

Born in September 3rd 1905, farm labourer and kitchen 'boy' at differend times Comrade Nkosi ended a career on Dingaan's Day which for selfless devotion to a noble cause the liberation of the oppressed masses of Africa ought to be an inspiration of all Africans.

4

FROM 'FUSION' TO FASCISM

The political, economic and social structure of South Africa rests on the foundation of the colonial dispossession and enslavement of the African people. To maintain and perpetuate that structure is the cardinal policy of all sections of the white ruling classes. Differences between them are and have ever been related only to the question of how best to achieve this policy. They are quick to sink their differences and join forces if the colonialist structure itself is at stake.

The dominant British imperialist and Witwatersrand finance-capitalist interests, represented traditionally by Smuts and his South African Party, strove to cover the brutal reality of the state behind a facade of respectability and humanitarian benevolence. There was much talk of 'Christian trusteeship' and vague democratic principle. The Cape franchise system (whereby a few Coloured and African men, a small fraction of the electorate in that Province, were entitled to vote for white men to represent them in Parliament and the Provincial Council) was upheld as a model towards which the remaining three provinces would advance in a more 'enlightened' but unspecified future. Much emphasis was placed on the cultivation of African, Coloured and Indian 'elites' and making minimal and illusory 'concessions' to them, as an insurance against revolution.

By contrast the Afrikaner rural (and, increasingly, urban)

bourgeoisie, represented by Hertzog's Nationalist Party, had no time for such compromises. They had come to office in the twenties by a mixture of 'anti-imperialist' demagogy and by inflaming the white chauvinism of the electorate. Unable seriously to challenge the positions of monopoly capitalism in the economic and political life of the country, the Nationalist government sought still further to entrench white privilege and solve economic difficulties at the expense of the oppressed African and other dark-skinned people.

Two measures in particular (the 'Hertzog Bills') were proposed for this purpose. The first was intended to complete and perpetuate the alienation of Africans from the land, as envisaged under the 1913 Land Act. The second was to remove the remaining African voters in the Cape from the common electoral roll. This required the support of the Smuts Party, for it required a two-thirds majority vote in Parliament. This the SAP-men refused, vowing that they would fight to the death in defence of the democratic principle.

The 'Fusion' Sell-Out

This shadow-boxing was abruptly ended by the intrusion of reality. Economic crisis spread through the capitalist world in the early thirties, following the spectacular crash of the U.S. Stock Exchange. Financial instability, mass unemployment and depression, rocked the capitalist system. Britain left the gold standard, and following a brief show of independence, under heavy pressure from the mining magnates and the Bank of England, South Africa did the same. Smuts and his followers entered Hertzog's Cabinet as junior partners; hymns were sung to unity. In due course, the 'Saps' and the 'Nats' (with the exception of a few 'bitter-enders' headed by Dr. Malan), merged into a single Party, the 'United Party'.

The price of this politicians' honeymoon was paid by the working people, as unemployment and depression spread through the country. As part of the deal, Smuts and the 'liberals' dropped their opposition to the Hertzog Bills.

Abandoned by their self-proclaimed friends the African people found themselves faced with a major onslaught on their remaining land and rights by the united forces of white South Africa.

It was a time calling for sound leadership, united organisation and effective mass action. Unfortunately at the beginning of the thirties these were the qualities most lacking among the organisations of the oppressed people.

The African National Congress was perhaps at its lowest ebb. Following the removal of the militant Gumede leadership, a period of inactivity and lack of initiative, accompanied by provincialism and internal quarrels had set in, recalling the fate of the I.C.U. after the anti-Communist 'purge' of 1926.

It was also an unhappy period for the Communist Party of South Africa.

The Fight Against Sectarianism

A dogmatic, sectarian tendency had developed within the international Communist movement and this was transmitted to South Africa by D. G. Wolton, who visited Moscow before his return to South Africa at the end of 1930, armed with the status of a 'C.I. representative'. Wolton had convinced the E.C.C.I. that S. P. Bunting was the chief representative of a 'serious right-wing danger'. A campaign was then in progress against right-wingers who were considered the main danger within the international movement, and the E.C.C.I. apparently accepted Wolton's version implicitly.

Bunting was acting secretary of the C.P.S.A. at that time since Albert Nzula had left for the Soviet Union, where he studied and took part in the work of the International, playing an effective role as a writer and organiser of the organ *The Negro Worker* before he contracted pneumonia and died in Moscow in 1933. Bunting was replaced by Wolton, who was elected as general secretary at the 1931 Party conference. He was joined in the Party leadership by Lazar Bach, a young Latvian immigrant, who joined the Party in the same year, and whose undoubted abilities secured his rapid promotion to the Political Bureau.

A harshly intolerant, ultra-left period ensued in the leadership, which cost the Party untold damage in membership and influence. A purge of 'right-wing opportunists' extended to the summary expulsion of W. H. Andrews and a number of other members who were trade union officials, as well as of S. P. Bunting.

The proceedings adopted were arbitrary in the extreme. The members concerned were not faced with charges or given a chance to reply. Many of them learnt of their expulsion for the first time in the Party journal. There was no possibility of any appeal. When S. P. Bunting tried to make an appeal to the membership, he was vilified publicly and scurrilously in a manner which was a disgrace to the communist movement, especially directed against one who had devoted most of his life and nearly all his resources to the Party.

A virulent campaign was conducted against 'Buntingism' within the Party and in its press, although no clear idea was conveyed as to what this might be or why it was wrong. As the victim himself ruefully commented: 'There is no such thing as "Buntingism." I have no theoretical differences with the present Political Bureau. I am indeed not a profound reader or theoretician . . .'

Attempts have been made, particularly by E. Roux, to place the entire blame for this period on the shoulders of the Comintern. He considered the South African delegation, of which he was a member, to have been 'brusquely' treated at the 1928 world congress, and later developed an 'anti-Comintern' and anti-Soviet obsession which disfigured his historical writings in *Time Longer Than Rope* and his biography of Bunting. Yet Roux, like other senior leaders at the time,

such as Marks and Mofutsanyana, participated in the expulsions and the errors of the period in the belief that the policy advanced by Wolton, Bach and the E.C.C.I. was correct. In 1930 he told the national Party conference:

> The Buntings and I went to Moscow to the Sixth Congress. There we showed quite plainly that we were almost completely ignorant of the fundamental principles of Communist propaganda in a country like South Africa. The fact that the C.I. was brusque with us is no excuse for our ignorance and misunderstanding of the theory they put forward.

Whatever the apportionment of blame, the fact is that under the leadership of Wolton and, following his final departure for Britain in 1933, that of Bach, the Party's membership and influence dwindled sadly. After the removal of M. Kotane from the editorship of *Umsebenzi,* its once-lively columns became filled with articles of a theoretical nature in the high-flown language identical to international theoretical organs of the time. Its circulation fell lower and lower.

Bach interpreted the 'independent Native republic' slogan not as a call for a national democratic revolution but as one for a socialist revolution. Criticising a formulation in *Umsebenzi* (9 June 1933) that the Party 'leads the fight against the slave laws for a free, democratic government, for a Black Republic,' he wrote, citing the theses of the thirteenth plenum of the E.C.C.I., 'the C.P. leads the fight for an Independent Native Republic, for the democratic dictatorship and Soviet Power, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism'. 'According to Kotane, the proletariat is more national conscious than class conscious,' he commented disapprovingly.

Kotane and other comrades vigorously challenged the views and the style of work that prevailed. In a letter to the Central Committee (See Appendix VI) he contended that 'Bolshevising' the Party meant not wholesale expulsions, but rooting the Party among the masses, studying and expressing their demands in language they understood. The application of Marxist-Leninist theory to the concrete realities of South Africa, as distinct from Europe, was the crux of the argument and the point of the C.I. Thesis.

A lengthy and acrimonious discussion ensued within the Party. Regrettably the debate was conducted against a background and atmosphere of suspicion and intrigue which repelled many members and supporters and failed to stimulate creative thinking. Kotane and others who demanded a united front policy were denounced as being under the influence of 'the native bourgeoisie', whose extent and influence were greatly exaggerated by the sectarians, though some weight was lent to their arguments by the reformist and opportunist middle-class leadership then prevalent in the A.N.C.

The majority of the membership supported Kotane's view and his proposal that Bach be excluded from the Political Bureau. The latter insisted on his right to appeal to the Comintern, confident that his

views would be upheld, and he left for Moscow to place his case before the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935. In this he was unsuccessful, and he never returned to South Africa.

The keynote speech at the Seventh World Congress was delivered by George Dimitrov, Bulgarian Communist leader and world-famous hero of the Reichstag Fire trial. It included a scathing denunciation of the sectarianism which had facilitated the isolation of the Communists and the weakening of the working class, and a passionate appeal for a united front everywhere of workers and other democratic sections against the menace of fascism and war. The Congress marked a crushing defeat for dogmatic, ultra-left tendencies in the Communist movement.

It ended, too, the sectarian period in the Party in South Africa. When S. P. Bunting died on 25 May 1936, *Umsebenzi*, the Party organ published a tribute to his memory, recalling his honesty and devotion, and his great contribution as the first to recognise the importance of the Africans. 'Thousands of exploited and oppressed South Africans,' it concluded, 'will remember Comrade Bunting as a staunch fighter'.

W. H. Andrews was readmitted to the Party and served for a number of years as Chairman. He remained a member of the Central Committee to the last year of his life, 1950. J. La Guma, another victim of the 'purge' likewise was one of those who returned to the Party.

But many others drifted out of the movement altogether. The disputes left deep scars and a legacy of personal antagonisms which lingered on for many years after the original issues had been settled and forgotten.

The All-African Convention

Rallying against the version of the 'Hertzog Bills', which now enjoyed the support of Smuts and his supporters, the All-African Convention gathered at Bloemfontein on 15-18 December 1935. It was an impressively broad assembly. Presided over by Professor D. D. T. Jabavu and attended by representatives of almost every shade of democratic opinion, including the Communist Party, it vigorously opposed the land and franchise laws and campaigned against them.

High hopes were placed on the All-African Convention by the oppressed people. Mass protest demonstrations were held throughout the country and Hertzog agreed to meet a deputation elected by the A.-A.C. But there was little underlying unity of policy or tactics.

Conflicting versions were circulated of what had happened when the A.-A.C. deputation met the Prime Minister. Hertzog claimed that the Africans had accepted the 'concessions' he offered. In return for the removal of qualified Africans from the common roll in the Cape Province, there would be a separate voters' roll for Africans in the Cape who would be allowed to elect three white M.P.s. Africans in the northern province would be permitted to elect four 'Native Representatives', also white, to the Senate. Finally there would be a 'Natives'

Representative Council' with purely advisory powers, a dummy 'parliament'. Both Senators and N.R.C. members would be chosen by 'indirect election' through Chiefs and 'electoral colleges.'

The members of the Africans' delegation vehemently denied that they had accepted this miserable compromise, though there were acrimonious disagreements as to what exactly had happened in the discussions. The legislation was duly adopted by the white parliament. A proposal for a boycott of the ensuing elections, held in 1937, was not agreed upon, and a number of African leaders stood as candidates. The Communist Party also entered two candidates in the Transvaal and Orange Free State: E. T. Mofutsanyana, then general secretary, for the N.R.C., and H. M. Basner, a lawyer who quit the Party the following year, for the Senate. Both were unsuccessful.

The Shadow of Fascism

All over the world the working people faced acute problems and dangers in the thirties. The victory of Hitler's Nazi party in Germany, representing the most racialistic and aggressive sections of finance-capitalism, encouraged reaction everywhere and threatened to precipitate a new world war.

The nature of the fascist threat was brought home brutally to Africa by Mussolini's unprovoked aggression against the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, the last remaining area of African independence. A wave of solidarity with the Ethiopians spread through the continent, expressed in our country by the refusal of black harbour workers to handle Italian armaments and war supplies.

On the other hand, Hitler's herrenvolk ideology found fertile soil among sections of the white racialists of South Africa. Organisations like the Greyshirts and the Blackshirts sprang up in imitation of the Nazi Party. Hitlerite ideas and influences were widespread in Malan's rump Nationalist Party; even within the ruling circles strident pro-Nazi voices were heard, notably that of the Defence Minister, Pirow. The Prime Minister himself, Hertzog, showed increasing susceptibility to German fascist influence.

This was by no means true to the same extent of the major centres of finance-capitalism, closely aligned with British imperialism. They welcomed Hitler's ruthless attacks on the working class, on Communism and the Soviet Union, but observed with anxiety the threat of revived German imperialism to the status quo.

Among broad sections of the middle class and working class strong expressions of anti-fascist unity and action developed, in sympathy with and support of the Spanish, Czechoslovaks and other victims of aggression and against the spread of fascism in South Africa. The organised labour movement fought back against the fascist drive to infiltrate, undermine and capture the trade unions.

The Communist Party of South Africa, like its brother Parties in

other countries, was foremost in alerting the working class and democratic sections of the public to the true nature of the fascist threat and the need to mobilise against it. Party members took the initiative in forming the Anti-Fascist League which enjoyed broad support from the labour movement and among progressive sections of the population, and conducted widespread educational activities in the towns and in the countryside.

In Cape Town, Communists joined with other anti-fascists in 1937 to launch a weekly newspaper, *The Guardian* under the editorship of Betty Radford, an able journalist who at one period joined the Communist Party and was elected as its candidate to the City Council. *The Guardian*, which was to constitute a vital and irreplaceable part of the entire democratic movement for many years, spoke out forcefully and effectively against poverty and injustice at home; fascism and aggression abroad. Its exposures of western collusion with Hitler and Mussolini, its campaigns of solidarity with the Spanish Republic, Czechoslovakia and other victims of Axis aggression, helped to educate an entire generation of revolutionaries, at a time when the English-language press, controlled by big mining and finance houses, and under pressure from the Hertzog government were virtually silent about the Nazi's crimes, and the Afrikaans newspapers under editors like Verwoerd, increasingly sympathetic towards them.

On the Liberation Front

In the field of the national liberation movement, fresh stirrings were making themselves felt. The 1937 celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the African National Congress encouraged a new wave of interest in and enthusiasm for the premier organisation of the majority of the people.

Progressives and patriots within each of the oppressed population groups were seeking for more militant policies and for unity of action in a common front against racial discrimination and white domination. At a time when the old-established organisations were under reformist and inactive leadership, these strivings took the form of new movements. The nationalist blocs of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses strove to change the policy and middle-class leadership of the Indian national movement. The National Liberation League, centred in Cape Town, and the Non-European United Front fought hard against the government's reactionary policies and hammered home the lesson of unity. Undoubtedly this hard propaganda work of the late thirties and early forties paved the way for the emergence of the united front of national liberation — the Congress Alliance — and the change in the outlook of the senior, established movements which enabled that alliance to be established.

Much of the drive behind both the anti-fascist movement and the revival of militancy in the liberation movement came from members of

the Communist Party. Names of its leaders such as Kotane in Cape Town, H. A. Naidoo in Natal, Maliba and Mofutsanyana in the Transvaal were prominent in the annals of the militant liberation movements. Sterling organisational work in the trade union movement too was being carried on among the African, Indian and Coloured workers; no account of the unions in that period could fail to pay tribute to the labours of such Communists as Ray Alexander and John Gomas in the Cape, Naidoo and George Ponen in Natal, or Willy Kalk and Issy Wolfson in the Transvaal.

Despite all this excellent work by its members, the Communist Party itself failed to make its presence felt as an organisation. Its journal, *Umsebenzi*, ran into financial difficulties and was compelled to cease publication after continuous publication since the foundation of *The International* in 1915. Membership had fallen away.

As Mofutsanyana told a special Party Conference convened in Johannesburg at the end of 1938 to consider this situation: 'Our independent work as a Party has suffered a considerable setback in the last few years.'

Much of the trouble stemmed from the lack of comradeship, the personal antagonisms and bitterness, which had remained as the legacy of the internal struggles, especially at the Party headquarters in Johannesburg.

A better spirit prevailed at Cape Town, at that time the country's second largest city and site of the legislative capital, where leading and experienced members such as W. H. Andrews and M. M. Kotane had taken up residence.

Accordingly, Kotane as head of the Cape Town delegation, proposed the transfer of headquarters there, 'as a temporary measure'. Johannesburg, the heart of South Africa's economy and industry was 'the natural centre', but it needed 'a breathing space'. This proposal was accepted, and with W. H. Andrews as Chairman, and M. M. Kotane as General Secretary a new executive* was elected, sited at Cape Town.

In fact, although the question was regularly debated at national conferences, the seat of the executive remained at the Cape until the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950.

The Second World War

The outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 precipitated a breach within the South African ruling classes, and split the Cabinet and the 'fused' United Party into their component parts. Headed by Smuts, the pro-British faction demanded the country enter the war; the pro-German Prime Minister, Hertzog, resisted. Following a showdown in Parliament, South Africa found herself once again involved in a

*The other members of the executive were Ray Alexander, Mrs Z. Gool, Sam Kahn and H. J. Simons.

European war, with Smuts as Prime Minister and Hertzog joining Malan in opposition. The 'non-European' majority of the population had never been consulted.

The leadership of the Communist Party assessed the character of the war from the viewpoint of the class interests of the workers, of working class internationalism. A report adopted by the national conference of the Party held in March 1940, traced the development of the international situation, since the Seventh Comintern Congress.

It cited Togilatti's prophetic words in 1935, when he pointed out that, trying to direct the fascist drive of German and Japanese imperialism into an anti-Soviet channel, the British bourgeoisie 'by the concessions and support which it gives to the instigators of war . . . accelerates the onslaught of a new world war into which the British Empire will inevitably be drawn'. The attempt to build a peace front had failed, and war had become inevitable. It was being fought by British imperialism not to defeat fascism but 'to maintain British dominance in Europe, to defend British colonies and retain British trade and investments overseas against a rival imperialism.'

However the white opposition to the war was being conducted by the Nationalist Party, deeply penetrated by fascist ideas, whose proposed 'neutrality' would have led to support for German imperialism and the imposition of a fascist regime internally. It was the Party's duty both to oppose the war and to resist the Nationalists. To fight imperialism required the independent struggle of the African, Coloured and Indian people. 'They will be able to fight such a struggle only if they develop organisations, leadership and political clarity. To *assist* them in this is the task of the Party.'

The Party's policy won wide support among the oppressed people. An appeal issued by the Non-European United Front (Transvaal) in 1940 demanded 'the right to live as human beings, the right to work in skilled trades, recognition of African trade unions, the abolition of white labour policy, the abolition of *all* anti-colour legislation, full rights of citizenship.' It concluded: 'Don't support this war where the rich get richer and the poor get killed.' The leader of the Transvaal NEUF, Dr. Dadoo, was charged for issuing this leaflet and making speeches in similar vein and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. A similar jail sentence was imposed on the Natal Indian leader D. A. Seedat. A number of leftists, including Max and Louis Joffe and Arnold Latti, were interned by the Smuts government while open pro-Nazis went unscathed.

In spite of such attacks and continuous police harassment, under the 'war emergency measures' adopted by the government, the Communist Party made substantial progress. A new spirit of unity and enthusiasm was developed under the leadership of Kotane and Andrews and the Cape Town executive. High standards of efficiency and activity were set, to which the membership willingly responded.

A marked improvement also took place in Johannesburg following the election in 1940 of a new district committee consisting in the main of young people who had not been involved in the internal disputes of the previous period, which succeeded in rallying and uniting the membership behind a political and organisational plan of activity. *Inkululeko* (Freedom) under the editorship of Michael Diphuko and subsequently of Edwin Mofutsanyana was established as a Party newspaper with articles in the Sotho, Zulu, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda and Shangaan languages, and a steadily rising circulation throughout the country. A radical Afrikaans monthly, *Die Ware Republikein,* (The True Republican) was also started, under the Party's influence. Constant public meetings, in halls and in the open air, and a stream of Party publications, succeeded in 'putting the CP on the political map.' By the 1941 national conference the general secretary Kotane was able to point to Johannesburg as an example and a pace-setter for the Party.

The Nazi Attack on the Soviet Union

A profound change in the international situation, and in the character and direction of the war, resulted from the all-out Nazi aggression against the Soviet Union in June 1941.

The Communist Party considered that the decisive front of the entire war was that of Soviet-Nazi combat, whose outcome would determine the future of humanity. The oppressed people of our country, declared the Party, could not be indifferent while the socialist Soviet Union, fortress of workers' power and national liberation everywhere was locked in a titanic struggle for survival.

Accordingly, the Party launched a series of dynamic campaigns to transform South Africa's contribution to the Allied war effort in accordance with the potentialities, by mobilising all sections of the population and all resources of the country.

The country's armed forces were restricted to the white minority; African soldiers were not armed and were restricted to non-combatant duties at vastly inferior rates of pay and conditions.

The enthusiasm of the masses could never be mobilised while they were subjected to pass laws and a host of discriminatory, colour-bar measures; their wages held down at starvation level while inflation caused soaring prices and profiteering was rife.

While the Smuts government purported to be fighting fascism abroad, it allowed openly pro-Nazi organisations to flourish in the country. The 'Ossewa Brandwag' (oxwagon guard) conducted sabotage operations designed to help the Hitlerites, and though some of its leaders (like Vorster, the present Prime Minister) were interned, the organisation as such was not outlawed. Nationalist Party leaders like Malan and Verwoerd were permitted to conduct public propaganda for the Nazis, and enter into private negotiations with them for the conversion of South Africa into a German satellite 'after the war'.

The Party demanded that African soldiers be armed and recruited on a basis equal to that of whites; that the pass system and political and industrial colour bars be scrapped; that the oppressed masses should enjoy democratic and citizenship rights in the country which they were called upon to defend.

A dynamic 'Defend South Africa' campaign was launched in 1942 with Party leaders addressing packed meetings in all parts of the country. Tens of thousands of copies of a series of pamphlets such as *Arm the People!* (reprinted in Appendix VII) were printed and sold.

Party Progress

The rousing campaigns of the Party, as well as the inspiring defence of their socialist country by the Soviet people, brought the Party a greater measure of support among all sections of the people than ever before. The circulation of *The Guardian* and *Inkululeko* rose to record levels; party membership increased rapidly; Communists were elected to City Councils in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and East London. The growth of the Party's influence, and the leftward trend of the people, were reflected in such diverse phenomena as the growth in size and militancy of the trade union movement, notably of the African Mine Workers' Union, the development of the pioneer peasant movement, A. Maliba's Zoutpansberg Balemi (Ploughmen's) Association, the popularity of the servicemen's association the Springbok Legion in which members of the Party like Jack Hodgson and Cecil Williams held leading positions.

A new spirit of militancy and unity among the people was reflected in the leadership of the national liberation movements. Progressives grouped around Dr. Naicker in Natal and Dr. Dadoo in the Transvaal successfully challenged the entrenched compromising groups, based on the wealthy merchant class, which had long dominated the Indian Congress.

Between 1941 and 1943 the membership of the Communist Party grew fourfold, and active District Committees existed in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, East London, Pretoria, the East Rand and Kimberley.

The Cape Town district demonstrated its strength in 1943 when Sam Kahn and Betty Radford, then editor of *The Guardian* were elected on the Party platform to the City Council, and Ray Alexander, John Gomas and others were rewarded for many years of slogging effort by a steady rise in the strength and militancy of the trade union movement.

In the 1942 elections for the 'Natives' Representative Council' in the Transvaal and Orange Free State the Party secured a large measure of support for its three candidates, E. T. Mofutsanyana, Alpheus Maliba, and J. Lekhota. Though the elections were especially designed to preclude the return of revolutionaries, they won hundreds of thousands of votes.

In the general election of 1943 the party nominated nine candidates,* and though none were successful in being elected by the white voters (only in the Cape did some Coloured men have the vote) they used the campaign to bring home to soldiers and civilians alike the Party's militant policy of unity against fascism and democracy for victory. The following year saw, for the first and only time, a Communist, Hilda Watts (Hilda Bernstein), returned by an all-white electorate when she won the Hilbrow seat for the Johannesburg City Council.

Militant Campaigns

The Party led and participated in a wide variety of imaginative mass activities during the war years. To combat profiteering and lack of government control over scarce commodities, the Party, especially in Natal and the Transvaal, conducted a series of spectacular "food raids" against shopkeepers who were hoarding scarce foodstuffs like sugar and rice and selling them – with police connivance – at far beyond their legally stipulated prices.

Another mass activity which demonstrated the mounting militancy of the workers, though not initiated by the Party, was the 'Shanty town' movement on the Witwatersrand. The housing position among Africans had become desperate. The number of African workers in industry rose from 156,000 in 1939 to 245,500 in 1945. In Johannesburg the African population increased by 57 per cent between 1936 and 1946. But no additional housing was provided for them, resulting in atrocious overcrowding. In 1944 thousands of families seized unoccupied land and erected their own dwellings from corrugated iron, packing cases and whatever makeshift building material they could lay their hands on. In the words of a Party pamphlet of the time, 'the people overflowed'. These 'shanty-towns' controlled and administered by the Africans themselves without white 'superintendents' or police, were anathema to the authorities. The Johannesburg City Council threatened to tear down the dwellings and evict the squatters by force. These attacks were vigorously opposed by the Communist Party, which mobilised public support through communal kitchens and other activities for the squatters.

The African workers fought back against inflationary wartime price rises. Although war measures had seriously increased the penalties for strikes by Africans, an official record of 304 strikes between 1939 and 1945 – the actual total was far greater – indicated the rising tide of working class militancy.

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*They were, on the Witwatersrand: Franz Boshoff, D. du Plessis, R. Fleet and I. Wolfson; in Cape Town, Miss J. Fourie, George Sacks, and H. Snitcher; in Durban E. Shanley and in East London, M. Muller.

Towards Unity

The period was also distinguished by the development of revolutionary African nationalism, especially among the youth and intelligentsia. The Youth League of the African National Congress, headed by Anton Lembede, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Joe Matthews and others, played an increasingly prominent part in the A.N.C. Despite their opposition to Communism, which they denounced as a 'foreign ideology', Youth Leaguers found common ground with Communists in demanding a more positive and revolutionary A.N.C. leadership and a turn from stereotyped and ineffective methods of struggle to radical mass action.

Unity of Communists and non-Communists in the common struggle for national liberation was carried an important stage forward with the anti-pass campaign of 1944-1945. A broadly representative conference, presided over by Dr. A. B. Xuma, then A.N.C. President-General, was attended by 540 delegates, in May 1945. The conference elected a National Anti-Pass Council headed by Xuma and with Transvaal Congress secretary David Bopape as secretary, and including Dr. Dadoo, M. Kotane, E. T. Mofutsanyana, J. B. Marks and A. Maliba. The subsequent Campaign aroused great mass enthusiasm. But when Dadoo and Selope Thema took an anti-pass petition with tens of thousands of signatures to Cape Town the following year to present it to J. H. Hofmeyr, acting as Prime Minister in Smuts's absence, he refused to meet them.

Clearly the period of petitions was coming to an end. The war was drawing to a conclusion, a prospect which rejoiced the hearts of the common people, but by no means those of the white ruling classes, of whatever party.

Victory in Europe

For the Nationalist Party and the various other Afrikaner nationalist movements which had backed Hitler, obviously the defeat of their idol was a cause for mourning rather than celebration.

Nor could Smuts and his government view the United Nations' victory with unmixed rejoicing. The defeat of fascism, in which the major part was played by the Soviet Union, has brought above a wave of advance by the forces of socialism and national liberation in most parts of the world.

In Europe the expulsion of the Nazi invaders was followed by the establishment of People's Democracies led by Communist Parties in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania and eastern Germany. Anti-fascist coalition governments, including representatives of the powerful Communist Parties, were elected in France and Italy. Britain rejected the Conservative Party in favour of the Labour Party.

In Asia a tide of independence struggles was bringing India, Burma, Indonesia, Malaya and Ceylon to the verge of independence. Under

Communist leadership China, Korea and Vietnam were advancing to complete liberation and socialism.

In Africa, too, it was becoming clear that the colonialists could no longer maintain their open rule.

The shadow of these impending events could not but evoke a chill of foreboding in the minds of the white racists of South Africa. No official celebrations were called for VE day, May 1945.

For the common people it was different. Perhaps the greatest demonstration the city had ever seen surged through the streets of Johannesburg, convened jointly by the African National Congress, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions and the Communist Party, and headed by the black-green-gold banner of the A.N.C. and the colourful flags of the United Nations. 'Finish the job – smash fascism in South Africa!' was the slogan of the day. Hardly a policeman was to be seen. For once the people felt themselves masters of the streets.

Passive Resistance

The year 1946 opened with a fresh attack on the Indian Community. In 1943 the Smuts government had introduced a measure (the 'Pegging Act') restricting the right of Indians to acquire property. In 1946 an even more vicious law the 'Ghetto Act' was introduced, whereby all land transfers were prohibited between Indians and non-Indians. This law, anticipating the 'Group Areas' laws of the Nationalist Party, was vigorously resisted by the Indian community.

The S.A. Indian Congress conference at Cape Town in February 1946 unanimously resolved to oppose the new law with 'concerted and prolonged resistance', and Passive Resistance Councils were appointed in Natal and the Transvaal.

On 2 June 1946 the Ghetto Bill became law, and the thirteenth of that month was proclaimed 'Resistance Day' in which a complete 'Hartal' (strike and closing of businesses) was observed by Indians throughout the country. A mass meeting of 15,000 in Durban, the main centre of Indian population, hailed the first batch of volunteers, headed by Dr. Naicker and M. D. Naidoo, who pitched tents on land reserved for whites. White hooligans attacked the 'Resistance Camp' but the defiers continued.

The first group to be jailed, on 27 June, included Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker. Within the next two years over 2,000 resisters (including 300 women) were sentenced. Dadoo and Naicker were sentenced a second time to six months' hard labour and not released until July 1948.

Neither the leadership nor the rank and file of the resisters was committed to the non-violent philosophy of Gandhi. Though many shared this philosophy, the movement included Communists and other revolutionaries. The Communist Party had never been dogmatic or inflexible concerning methods and techniques of struggle. Passive resistance in South Africa at that time was a method of *action*, going

beyond verbal protests, traditional to South Africa and particularly to the Indian community, understood and accepted by the masses. The Party gave unstinted support to the campaign and many members followed Dadoo's lead by participating in it as volunteers. The campaign aroused the Indian people to a high level of political consciousness and militancy. It gained generous admiration and support from the African and Coloured people and from democratically minded whites. It certainly stimulated and inspired the Defiance Campaign of 1953.

The African Mine Strike: 1946

Bad food, wretched living conditions in the compounds, and miserably inadequate pay were the main grievances of the biggest concentration of African workers in South Africa, the Witwatersrand miners. Their grievances, reflected by frequent disturbances on the mines, found organisational expression in the growth of the African Mine Workers' Union, whose 1944 conference was attended by 700 delegates representing over 25,000 members from every mine along the Reef.

In an attempt to stave off the workers' discontent the government appointed a Witwatersrand Mine Natives' Wage Commission (the Lansdowne Commission). In reply to the overwhelmingly strong case for better wages put before it by the Union, the Commission's report bluntly stated that its recommendations were made within the framework of preserving the cheap labour system. What was paid to African miners, said the report, was not intended to be a living wage, but merely a 'supplement' to the workers' 'basic income' allegedly earned from the land.

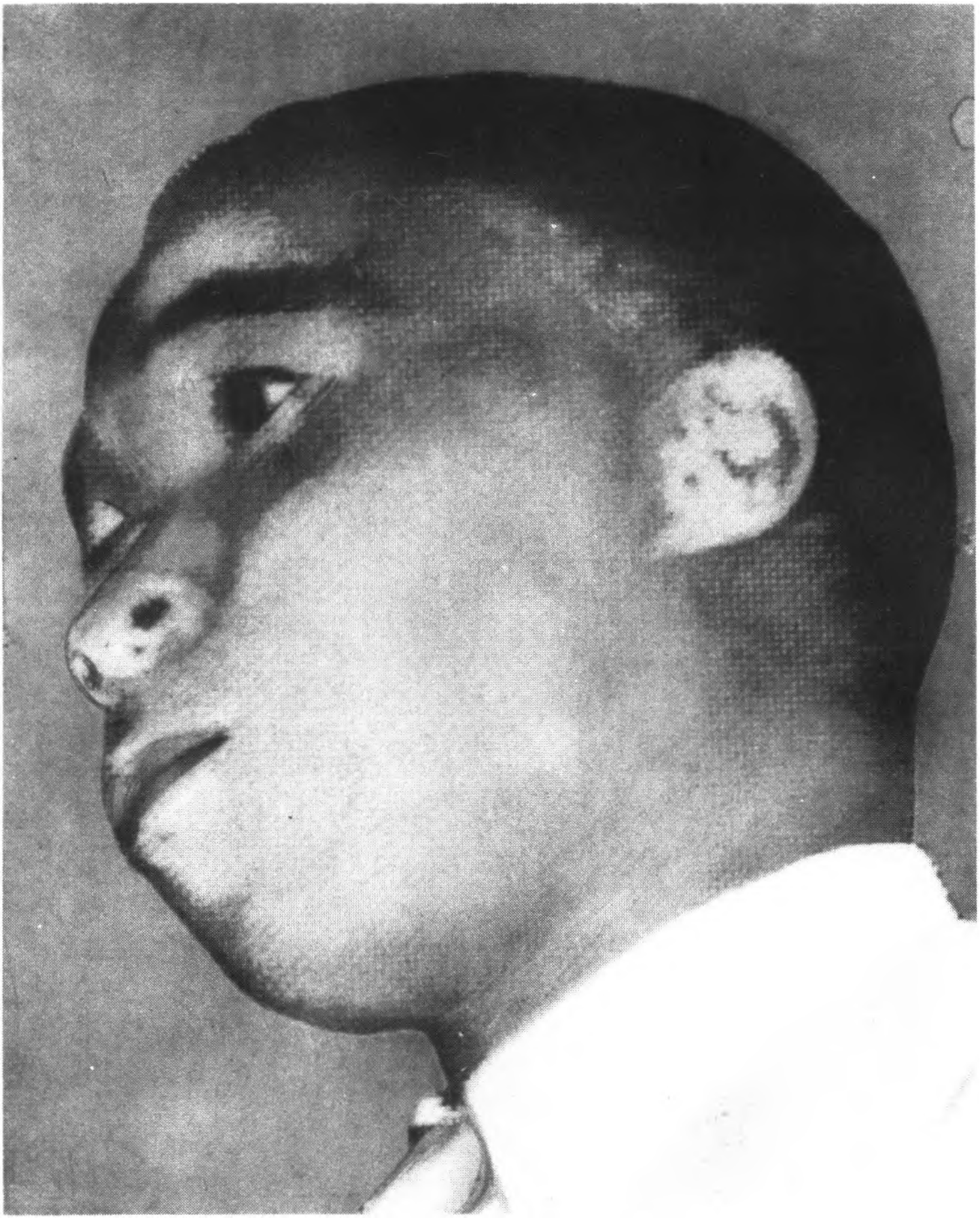
Evidence of acute starvation in the Transkei and other rural areas was ignored.

The Commission also attacked 'the Communists' and stated its opinion that the African miners 'had not yet reached the stage of development which would enable them safely and usefully to employ trade unionism.' This was a signal for the employers and the government to launch an all-out attack on the A.M.W.U. War Measure 1425 banning meetings on the goldfields was a crippling blow at the union's organisers, who had relied mainly on shaft-head meetings to collect subscriptions and recruit members. Company and police spies were sent to every compound, and the Chamber of Mines instructed its office staff not even to acknowledge correspondence from the Union.

The miners received the report of the Lansdowne Commission with bitter disappointment, which rose to boiling point when even the miserly 3d. a day cost of living allowance that had been recommended was refused by the employers. The A.M.W.U., headed by J. B. Marks as chairman and J. J. Majoro as secretary continued to grow in numbers and militancy. Its May 1946 Conference was its biggest ever, representing a majority of the African miners. It demanded a minimum

J. B. Marks, Chairman of
South African Communist Party

Y. M. Dadoo



Govan Mbeki

Abram Fischer

wage of 10s. a day, the withdrawal of War Measure 1425, and improved rations. The executive was instructed to make one more attempt to negotiate with the Chamber, failing which strike action should be taken. From May to July the Union sent letter after letter to the Chamber, without receiving even the courtesy of a reply.

On Sunday August 4 many thousands of delegates from all over the Witwatersrand flocked to an open-air Union conference at the Newtown Market Square, Johannesburg. From all sections of the Witwatersrand, speakers mounted the platform demanding strike action. One worker proposed that it begin the following week. He said:

> When I think how we left our homes in the reserves, our children naked and starving, we have nothing more to say. Every man must agree to strike on August 12. It is better to die here than to go back with empty hands.

The strike motion was carried unanimously. A letter to the Chamber, conveying this decision and appealing for last-minute negotiations, was as usual ignored. The daily newspapers, themselves controlled by the mining millionaires, suppressed the news of the impending strike. The first that most readers of the *Rand Daily Mail* heard about it was on Monday morning 12 August, when it reported that the strike call had been 'a complete failure'.

The Star, the same afternoon, told a very different story. Tens of thousands of African miners were on strike from the East to the West Rand.

In fact the week that followed, August 12-19, saw at least 100,000, a third of the African working force, involved in a stoppage that brought a large proportion of the mining industry to a standstill.

From beginning to end the Chamber of Mines and its agency, the government, 'dealt with' this situation by means of force and terror. A special Cabinet sub-Committee was set up to implement this policy. Two thousand armed police were drafted to the Witwatersrand and placed at the disposal of the Chamber and its compound managers with one clear objective: to break the strike and get the miners back to work. When intimidation by armed police failed, they charged with bayonets or opened fire to force the workers down the shafts. When workers forced down started sit-down strikes underground they were followed by police who beat them up, drove them 'stope by stope, level by level' to the surface and there charged them with batons until, according to *The Star* they 'volunteered to go back to work'. Hundreds of workers were killed and wounded (no official figures were ever released) in such police attacks.

J. B. Marks and other union leaders were arrested in the opening days of the strike. When the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions called for a general strike in solidarity with the miners, a mass rally for this purpose was dispersed by armed police, and James Philips, leader of the Coloured garment workers and chairman of the general strike committee was arrested together with other committee members.

The African mine workers' strike of 1946 aroused widespread support among the ranks of the working class and national liberation movements.

The Johannesburg District Committee of the Communist Party, of which J. B. Marks was a member, had kept the situation under constant review and reported it to the Central Executive in Cape Town. Immediately after the beginning of the strike, on August 12, it resolved unanimously on 'full support for the action of the African mine workers in striking for a minimum wage of ten shillings a day and decent working conditions'. It called on all sections of the labour movement for solidarity with the miners, and demanded that the Chamber of Mines and the Government 'meet the AMWU leaders to effect a settlement'. Members and supporters of the Party responded magnificently. Many spent the week with little or no sleep, going from their jobs at factories or offices to report to the AMWU offices to volunteer assistance; helping to roneo Union leaflets – the only contact with the miners during the reign of terror – distributing them at dawn to compounds from Randfontein to Springs.

The Natives' Representative Council, meeting during the strike vigorously protested against the brutality used against the miners, and when the government-appointed Chairman refused to allow a discussion on the strike the Council resolved to adjourn indefinitely.

'The miners' strike', as an article in *Fighting Talk* correctly commented in 1954, eight years later, 'was one of those great historic incidents that, in a flash of illumination, educates a nation, reveals what has been hidden, destroys lies and illusions'.

The 1946 strike was broken by lawless and ruthless violence by the state. It was followed by a wave of repression against the miners and their union. Massive victimisation was followed by even more intensive methods of regimentation, terror and espionage that ended open union activity among African miners for a generation. The repression was followed by an unprecedented drive against those who had stood with the miners, and in the first place against the Communist Party.

The week after the strike police raided the offices of the Communist Party and *The Guardian*, and the homes of their officials and staff, in all the main towns of the country. Hundreds of documents and files were seized, as well as lists of Party members and supporters.

The leaders of the A.M.W.U., M. Kotane, the general secretary of the C.P.S.A., and the members of the Johannesburg District Party Committee* were among 52 accused in a mass trial in Johannesburg of a 'conspiracy' to bring about the strike.

The charge of conspiracy was later dropped but nearly all those accused were found guilty of assisting the African miners in their illegal

*They were: H. Bernstein, L. Bernstein, B. Bunting, Y. M. Dadoo, D. du Plessis, A. Fischer, R. Fleet, M. Harmel, J. B. Marks, E. Mofutsanyana, W. Roberts and J. N. Singh.

strike, a charge which they did not deny.

But the Smuts government and its 'special branch' of the police were determined to prove the existence of a 'Communist conspiracy' and to fasten the blame for the miners' strike upon it. In November 1946 the members of the Central Executive Committee in Cape Town* were arrested in connection with the strike and faced with a number of serious charges, including 'sedition'. The charges were flimsy, and the 'evidence' even more so. The indictment was quashed; the accused re-arrested while a new charge and indictment were framed. These proceedings dragged on for over two years, by which time Smuts and his United Party had given way to the yet more ferociously anti-Communist Nationalist Party under Dr. Malan.

Hardly was the second world war over than international imperialism launched the new 'cold war' of which the atom bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the opening shots.

Malanazi Menace

Imperialism's anti-communist cold war was a godsend to the Nationalist Party. It had been quick to recover from the shock and setback of Hitler's defeat. With hopes of a military coup arising out of a Nazi victory gone, Afrikaner nationalism was striving hard to present a new picture of itself to the public. The Greyshirt and Blackshirt organisations were swallowed by Malan's Nationalist Party; the Ossewa Brandwag merged with, and virtually took over, Hertzog's Afrikaner Party. Malan and Hertzog formed a working agreement with their sights on a Parliamentary victory in the 1948 general election.

The Nationalist Party as it emerged in the post-war years was deeply influenced by Nazi ideas and techniques of organisation and demagogy, and dominated by the rising and aggressive class of Afrikaner capitalists, financiers and industrialists, rather than the conservative farmers who had once been the backbone of Afrikaner nationalism. The Afrikaner Broederbond (Brotherhood) an elitist secret society had vastly extended its influence and control over the Nationalist Party, the Dutch Reformed Churches and the powerful Afrikaner economic institutions to which they had consciously directed their main efforts. These in turn financed the highly organised and professional election machine of the Nationalist Party.

The Nationalist Party won a Parliamentary victory in the 1948 election after an unbridled campaign of white chauvinism and anti-Communist raving among the white electorate.** Its main slogan

*They were W. H. Andrews (Chairman), M. M. Kotane (Secretary), F. Carneson, I. Horvitch, L. Philips, B. Radford, H. J. Simons and H. Snitcher.

**In fact the Nationalists received only 39.85 per cent of the votes cast and owed their Parliamentary majority (79 seats to 74 for their opponents) to the 'weighting' system which favours rural as against urban constituencies. The three Communist candidates, F. Carneson, D. du Plessis and M. Harmel were defeated.

was 'apartheid' (separateness) — a word which has become known in every part of the world as a synonym for race-hatred and oppression.

'Shocked and bewildered. That just about sums up the feeling of most South Africans on learning the result of the General Election . . .' Thus read a pamphlet, *Malanazi Menace*, issued by the Communist Party in Johannesburg shortly after the elections. It proceeded to deliver a grim warning of what the Malan government had in store for the country.

> 'What is the much publicised "policy" of apartheid? . . . It is not a new policy . . . All they propose is to make the Non-European more of a slave, an outcast and a third class citizen in the land of his birth'.

The Party called for unity and resistance. United the people of South Africa could bar the road to fascism, if they were alerted to the menace and if they would 'reject the apostles of panic and despair and take the part of resistance and confidence in themselves'.

'We South African Communists are not afraid of the threats of the Nationalists. They may persecute individuals, but history has shown that the Communist movement is unconquerable . . . To all who oppose the Nationalist Party government . . . we say: Unite in resistance to any and every act of suppression, to every infringement of rights . . . Build up and strengthen your democratic organisations, your trade unions, your national organisations. Down with fascism! Forward to freedom!'

Rallying the People

This militant policy of resistance and unity was vigorously propagated. Until June 1950 it was, in the first place, the Communist Party, through intensive meetings in the open air and in halls, through its publications and its members in the trade unions and mass organisations, which fought 'the apostles of panic and despair' and truly rallied the people's resistance.

The fighting stand of the Communist Party was warmly appreciated by the masses, in particular by the African people. In the 1948 Parliamentary election for the African representative from the Western Cape constituency, Sam Kahn was returned as the C.P. candidate. He proved an outstanding Parliamentarian whose speeches in the House aroused the spirits of the people as much as they infuriated the government. Another Communist candidate, Fred Carneson, was elected to the Cape Provincial Council from the same constituency.

Renewed militancy was manifested in the African National Congress. Under the presidency of Dr. A. B. Xuma important steps had been taken towards unity. The signing of the Dadoo-Xuma agreement in the Transvaal and subsequently the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo agreement (March 1947) on behalf of the African National Congress and the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses, laid the firm foundations for the

subsequent development of the fighting Congress Alliance, the national liberation front of our country.

The Programme of Action adopted by the 1949 A.N.C. conference called for mass action – strikes, boycotts and resistance – as opposed to passive protests and deputations on which much reliance had been placed in the past. A new leadership with Dr. J. Moroka as president and W. Sisulu as secretary was elected to implement this plan.

May 1st, 1950

The way forward was shown by the workers of Transvaal, in the May 1st strike of 1950. The Nationalist government had begun its drive against the people's rights in real earnest, imposing arbitrary bans on Yusuf Dadoo and Sam Kahn and proposing pass laws be extended to African women.

In response a massive 'Defend Free Speech' Convention was called in Johannesburg in March by the A.N.C. (Transvaal) the Transvaal Indian Congress, the African People's Organisation and the Johannesburg District of the Communist Party. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Moroka the conference adopted a militant series of demands for freedom of speech, movement and organisation, for land and the ending of colour bars. It issued a call for a general strike on the first of May.

This united call was followed up by a highly effective campaign of mass propaganda to which the workers responded enthusiastically, even though the A.N.C. Youth League mistakenly stood aside. That mistake was understood and not repeated, for the strike was an outstanding success. Virtually all industry on the Witwatersrand came to a stop; hardly a dark-skinned face was to be seen in the streets of Johannesburg, Springs, Randfontein and other Reef towns.

The police had banned all meetings and gatherings on the day; and for the most part the non-white public remained quietly in their homes, following the call of the leadership to do so. But in the evening the trigger-happy police opened fire on small groups of young Africans in Alexandra Township and elsewhere. Eighteen were killed and over thirty wounded. A wave of anger and indignation spread throughout the country.

Suppression and Dissolution

It was against this background of rising mass struggle that the Malan Government announced the terms of its first major measure on the road to transforming South Africa into a fascist police state, the Unlawful Organisations Bill (later passed and renamed as the Suppression of Communism Act).

In terms of this law the Communist Party of South Africa was declared an unlawful organisation. It was made a punishable offence to defend or advocate 'the doctrine of Marxian socialism' 'or any related doctrine'. 'Communism' was defined so broadly as to include 'any

doctrine or scheme which aimed at . . . bringing about social change' by means of 'unlawful acts'.

All the names of former members or supporters of the Communist Party were to be compiled into a list by a person designated 'the liquidator', and the presence of one's name on this list made the 'listed' person liable to a number of administrative actions without recourse to law. If the Minister of Justice 'deemed' that any such person's activities were 'liable to lead to Communism' he could, without giving reasons or allowing the victim a chance to reply, remove him from his position or membership of a trade union or any other organisation, restrict him to a given area (even to his own house) and preclude him from taking part in any gathering.

Previous South African legislation had contained provisions for arbitrary and despotic Ministerial power: for example Pirow's Riotous Assemblies Act of 1929, had given Ministerial powers of 'deportation' from one area to another, and the Native Administration Act of 1927 had given the Minister of Native Affairs (in his capacity of 'paramount chief') authority to remove individuals or even entire communities from one place to another. But never before had such sweeping and drastic powers, without remedy in any court, been placed in the hands of the Minister of Justice (in fact of the Special Branch of the police).

The Bill had been considered by a 'Select Committee' of the South African Parliament including members of the United and Labour Parties and Mrs. Ballinger representing the African voters of the Eastern Cape – she and John Christie (Labour) voted against it; the United Party members, while opposing some of the sections, proposed that 'Communism' be made tantamount to treason and punishable by the death sentence.

The Executive Committee of the Communist Party protested that it was never given a hearing:

'Threatened with forcible disbandment, facing the prospect of endless persecution of our members, we have every right to expect from the instigators of this measure a precise statement of the charges levelled against us, the evidence on which they are based, and an opportunity to make our reply before an impartial tribunal. Instead, we have received nothing but abusive and uncorroborated statements and a *fait accompli* in the form of a Bill'.

A more militant note was struck by the veteran founder of the Party, Bill Andrews, in a message to the membership on his eightieth birthday. 'Remembering the path which has been blazed by our members for over thirty years and inspired by the example of such fighters for freedom as Nkosi and many others who died for their opinions, let us face boldly the renewed and perhaps more ruthless attacks which are threatened,' he wrote.

In the event he was one of only two Central Committee members to oppose the motion put forward by the Executive, that the Party be

dissolved, when the C.C. met to consider the Bill on the 6th and 7th of May.*

Faced with this draconic measure, the Party revealed certain weaknesses which had developed in its ranks, as well as its indestructible virtues. A certain tendency towards legalistic illusions had penetrated the Party and sections of its leadership. Despite the open threats of the Nationalist Party to ban the C.P., no effective steps had been taken to prepare for underground existence and illegal work. A hastily convened Central Committee meeting held in May 1950, when the terms of the new law became known, decided by majority vote and without consulting the membership to dissolve the Party. It was suggested, among other things, that the rank and file would not be prepared or able to face dangers and difficulties of underground work.

The fallacy of this argument was proved in the ensuing period, when the great majority of the Marxist-Leninists, including most of the leaders who had earlier voted for dissolution, showed their courage and devotion to their principles by successfully rebuilding the South African Communist Party in conditions of illegality.

Subsequent events made clear the distinction between those among the former leadership who had regarded the dissolution as a temporary and tactical expedient and those who had come to doubt the need for the very existence of the independent Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class.

The workers of South Africa will study and learn from the errors which culminated in the dissolution of the Party; but above all they will honour and treasure the Party's heroic efforts and achievements.

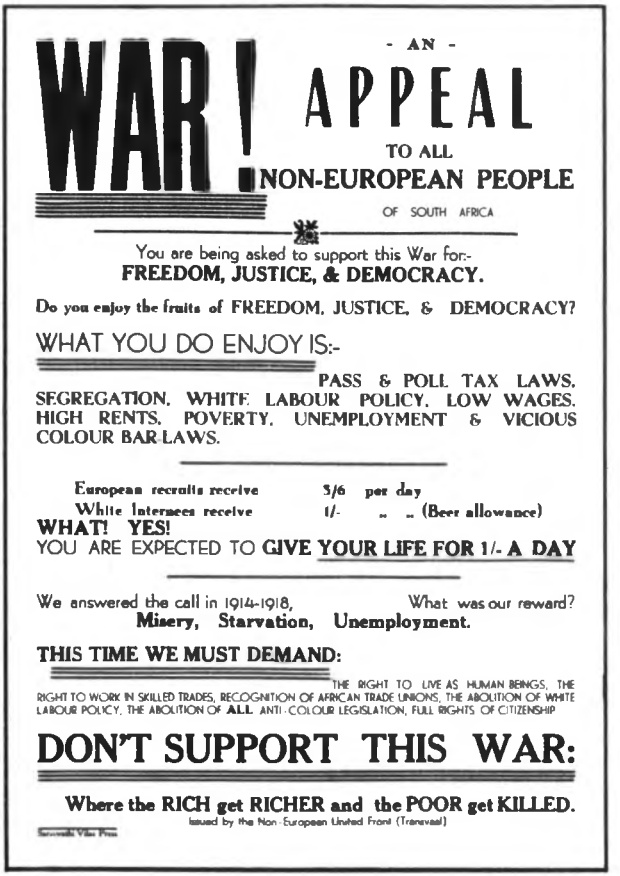
During the course of its legal and semi-legal existence the Communist Party of South Africa made an indelible impression on the history of our country. Its revolutionary work and outlook brought about profound changes in the thinking, political outlook, demands, forms of organisation and methods of struggle of the oppressed and exploited people. Its members, mostly workers and peasants with little formal education, had set standards of political application and clear-headedness, of personal devotion, courage and selfless sacrifice which set an example for the entire liberation and trade union movement.

In addition to those comrades who have been mentioned in the preceding pages of this outline, the Party had produced scores and hundreds of steeled revolutionaries of the calibre of Raymond Mhlaba, Gladstone Tshume, Eli and Violet Weinberg, Ivan Schermbrucker, Dan Tloome, Ahmed Kathrada, Flag Boshielo, Elias Motsoaledi, M. P.

*The Executive consisted of I. O. Horvitch (chairman), M. M. Kotane (secretary), B. P. Bunting, F. Carneson, S. Kahn, J. La Guma and H. J. Simons. The remaining members were W. H. Andrews, Y. M. Dadoo, D. du Plessis, A. Fischer, M. Harmel, J. B. Marks, E. T. Mofutsanyana, G. Ponen and I. Wolfson.

Naicker, T. H. Gwala, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Ben Mnisi, Billy Nair, Lionel Forman, Johnson Ngwavela and others far too many to enumerate.

It was comrades like these, together with brave non-Communist revolutionaries, who set the pace and bore the brunt of enemy attacks in the epic struggles of the fifties and sixties. Many of them took part in the building, in the taxing and dangerous conditions of illegality and terror, the underground South African Communist Party, which embodied all the best traditions of the C.P.S.A. and raised the banner of Communism to yet higher levels in the fifties and the sixties.



WAR!

- AN -

APPEAL

TO ALL

NON-EUROPEAN PEOPLE

OF SOUTH AFRICA

You are being asked to support this War for:-

FREEDOM, JUSTICE, & DEMOCRACY.

Do you enjoy the fruits of FREEDOM, JUSTICE, & DEMOCRACY?

WHAT YOU DO ENJOY IS:-

PASS & POLL TAX LAWS. SEGREGATION. WHITE LABOUR POLICY. LOW WAGES. HIGH RENTS. POVERTY. UNEMPLOYMENT & VICIOUS COLOUR BAR LAWS.

European recruits receive	5/6	per day
White Internees receive	1/-	.. .. (Beer allowance)

WHAT! YES!

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO **GIVE YOUR LIFE FOR 1/- A DAY**

We answered the call in 1914-1918, What was our reward?

Misery, Starvation, Unemployment.

THIS TIME WE MUST DEMAND:

THE RIGHT TO LIVE AS HUMAN BEINGS, THE RIGHT TO WORK IN SKILLED TRADES, RECOGNITION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS, THE ABOLITION OF WHITE LABOUR POLICY, THE ABOLITION OF **ALL** ANTI-COLOUR LEGISLATION, FULL RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP

DON'T SUPPORT THIS WAR:

Where the RICH get RICHER and the POOR get KILLED.

Issued by the Non-European United Front (Transvaal)

1948 leaflet (see p. 78)

5

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST APARTHEID

Essentially, the theory and practice of 'apartheid' as expounded and implemented by the Nationalist Party, is a continuation of the policy of its predecessors in South Africa over three centuries, from the days of Jan van Riebeeck: the oppression and exploitation of the majority of the people for the benefit of the rich and privileged. But, coming at a time when the bestiality of German Fascism had aroused the world against racialist and herrenvölk ideas, a time when hundreds of millions in Asia and Africa were asserting their rights to independence and human dignity, the policy of apartheid, that revolting mixture of neo-Nazism, colonialist arrogance and Calvinist righteousness, was pursued with a lunatic thoroughness and callous disregard for humanity that shocked and outraged the conscience of the world.

Under the successive regimes of Malan (1948), Strijdom (1954), Verwoerd (1958) and Vorster (1966) a mountainous burden of oppressive and discriminatory legislation was piled upon the shoulders of the already overburdened African, Coloured and Indian people. Pass laws were made even more stringent and extended to African women. 'Non-whites' were herded like cattle into ghettoes ('group areas'), 'Bantu homelands', 'resettlement areas' and farm prisons. The vestigial franchise rights of African and Coloured men in the Cape Province were abolished.

These attacks on the people were accompanied by an endless succession of measures to suppress the rising tide of resistance and opposition which they evoked; to destroy what freedom of speech and organisation existed; to transform South Africa, step by step, into a fascist police state, ruled by lawless terror.

The United Party which virtually monopolised the Parliamentary 'opposition,'* excelled itself from year to year in its servile support of government policies, divesting itself of every shred of the democratic principles it had once pretended to, and vying with the Nationalists in degrading appeals to white chauvinism and red-baiting. More and more obviously the only real forces of opposition and resistance revealed themselves outside white politics and its Parliament, in the black working class and the liberation movements of the oppressed people.

These movements rose to the challenge, achieving a steadily growing measure of inner strength and unity, of revolutionary clarity of purpose and leadership.

June 26, 1950

It will always be to the credit of the African National Congress that when the first major onslaught was launched to illegalise the Party of the working class, it did not stand aside but courageously took the lead and threw all its resources into the fight for the legal existence of the Communist Party.

As soon as the terms of the Unlawful Organisations Bill became known in May 1950, the National Executive Committee of the A.N.C. called an emergency conference in Johannesburg. Attended by representatives of the executives of the South African Indian Congress, the A.P.O. and the Communist Party – the S.A. Trades and Labour Council and the Labour Party declined invitations – the conference heard an analysis of the Bill and reviewed the government's record.

Dr. Dadoo, for the S.A. Indian Congress, made an impassioned speech calling for the setting aside of past differences and the establishment of unity against fascism and for freedom. Nelson Mandela, O. R. Tambo, W. Sisulu and other leaders of the Youth League, now on the N.E.C. of the A.N.C., responded in like spirit. If the attack on the Communist Party, said Tambo, were allowed to pass without resistance, none of the democratic organisations would be spared. 'Today it is the Communist Party,' he declared. 'Tomorrow it will be our trade unions, our Indian Congress, our A.P.O., our African National Congress.'

The conference resolved on mass action, in protest against the law to suppress the Communist Party and other undemocratic measures. 26 June 1950 was set aside as a day of mourning for those killed by the

*Until 1960 there were three representatives of Cape African voters in Parliament; the Labour Party lost its remaining three M.P.s in the 1958 general election.

police on 1 May, a day of nationwide strikes and protests. A joint committee was established to implement the decision.

The campaign that followed, and the massive response from all parts of the country, marked a milestone in the development of the *unity in action* of the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples, together with the revolutionary working class movement, the 'Congress Alliance'.

To bring together all these broad forces was no easy task. Years of government divide-and-rule policy towards African, Coloured and Indian people had not been without effect. The seeds of political and ideological division had been sown among the various sections of the people. To achieve the cherished goal of the Communist Party, of unity of Communist and non-Communist patriots in the common liberation struggle, meant hard and patient work, not only to break down long-cultivated prejudices and misunderstandings that existed in the liberation movement, but also to eliminate sectarianism of all kinds within the ranks of the Communists themselves.

The concept of June 26 as Freedom Day was born in 1950. It was to become a rallying day for the forces of freedom in the years that followed, years in which the Communists, at every level of the movement, set a standard of loyalty, courage and devotion which cemented the unity of liberation and working class forces in common struggle and sacrifice.

Though the first Freedom Day action had been mainly concentrated in the urban areas, the signs were already present of an upsurge in the rural areas as well. During 1950, at Witzieshoek, in the Orange Free State, the peasants came out in rebellion against the state policy of cattle-culling and their shortage of land and starvation conditions of life. Many were killed and wounded in clashes with the police, following which a number of African leaders were sentenced to heavy sentences for 'public violence'.

In 1951 the government embarked upon its long and stubborn campaign to remove the Coloured men of the Cape Province from the voters' roll. The first reaction of the Coloured people was militant. A united Franchise Action Council was set up in Cape Town, and over 15,000 Coloured people marched through the streets of the city following a mammoth meeting on the Grand Parade. Unfortunately this promising movement was wrecked – as were many other movements of the Coloured people – by the Trotskyite-influenced leadership of the so-called Non-European Unity Movement.

The Defiance Campaign

In 1952, again on June 26, the African and Indian Congresses launched the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws, in which 8,500 disciplined volunteers systematically flouted various apartheid measures and suffered imprisonment.

Undoubtedly the movement was partly based on the experience of South African Indians' passive resistance campaigns of 1906 and 1913, and this has led some observers to equate the Defiers of 1952 with the Gandhian doctrines of 'soul force'. The parallel is incorrect. The Defiance Campaign was not designed to end the system of white supremacy by the sacrifices of its victims; it was seen as an effective form of training and mobilising disciplined volunteers in non-violent action at a time when other (i.e. violent) means were not yet accepted by the majority of the people or their leaders. It was for that very reason that the campaign was supported by Communists and other revolutionaries, and that the very first volunteers included Kotane, Dadoo and other Communist leaders.

In February 1953 the government brought in a law to kill the campaign by imposing ferocious penalties for any legal offence committed as a protest. Clearly new methods were called for.

Yet the effects of the campaign fully justified its planners. It transformed the character of the African National Congress, from what may have seemed to many a body of words to one of deeds. The Defiance Campaign marked the transition of the A.N.C. from a loosely knit body to an effective organisation in which men of action counted for more than orators, in which workers of town and country, and young men and women, played an increasingly preponderant role. The temper of the 'new Congress' found a warm answering chord among the masses, who surged to the A.N.C. in support and membership.

The leadership was correspondingly strengthened. Dr. Moroka, who had succumbed to the pressure of the state to 'dissociate himself' from 'Communism' during the trial of Congress leaders which followed the campaign, lost his position as Congress President at the next annual conference. He was replaced by a man who was to become the symbol of African courage, militancy and resistance until his death in 1967, Chief Albert John Lutuli.

The Indian Congress, likewise, greatly consolidated its ranks around Dr. Naicker in Natal, Yusuf Dadoo in the Transvaal, and their militant colleagues.

The defiance campaign stimulated the growth of new democratic movements among minority sections of the population. The African People's Organisation was succeeded by the Coloured People's Organisation (later, Coloured People's Congress) under the presidency of James la Guma. A meeting of white Congress supporters was convened by the A.N.C. and addressed by O. R. Tambo, after which it was decided to establish the Congress of Democrats, unconditionally committed to uphold the Congress policy of equal votes, rights and opportunities for all.

It was these four organisations which joined forces to call the Congress of the People (June 26 1955) which met at Kliptown, near Johannesburg, after 18 months of intensive preparation.

The South African Communist Party

Despite the illegalisation of the Party in 1950, the great majority of the Communists remained at their posts in the working class and liberation movements, but they did not lose sight of the need, reinforced by daily experience, for independent, collective, Marxist-Leninist discussion, organisation and leadership. Immediately after dissolution, the seasoned Marxist-Leninist core came together to hammer out a course of action in the light of South African realities. Two minority views were expressed. The first was that Communists should withdraw from all public activities in such mass organisations as were still legally permitted, to concentrate on 'the underground'. The other was that there was no need for the Communist Party at that stage in South Africa.

The majority firmly rejected both of these incorrect views. It was vital to maintain such mass work as was legally possible. An independent Marxist-Leninist party was essential as well, both to fulfil its long-term mission of winning a socialist South Africa based on workers' power, and also to ensure the success of the immediate fight for national liberation and democracy. Hence the Communists, as part of an organised collective body, had both to participate actively in the public, legal mass movement, and to combine this with persistent planned illegal work to rebuild and strengthen the Party as the vanguard of the most advanced class, the working class.

Accordingly, a provisional centre set to work to accomplish these twin, and related objectives. Through methodical, though necessarily cautious, work Party cells and district committees were established in the main centres of the country. By the beginning of 1953 a national conference was convened, which adopted a programme and rules and adopted the name, the South African Communist Party. Its purpose was 'to carry forward and raise still higher the banner of the Communist movement under the new and testing conditions of illegality'. Its task was that of 'combining legal mass work with the illegal work of building the Marxist-Leninist Party'. While distinguishing itself in its name and approach from the former C.P.S.A. which 'despite its great achievements and struggles . . . proved incapable of surviving under illegal conditions', the reborn Party declared itself 'the heir to the tradition created by the C.P.S.A. . . . of unflinching struggle against oppression and exploitation, for unity of the workers and freedom-loving people of our country, irrespective of race and colour'.

Bannings and Proscriptions

The Party and the liberation and trade union movements worked under ever-increasing difficulties.

From May, 1952, the government set about systematically eliminating legal radical opposition through the Suppression of Communism Act and a stream of additional suppressive legislation.

Scores of trade unionists and African and Indian Congress leaders were served with government notices 'banning' them from working for or belonging to their organisations to which they had devoted their lives. Among the trade unionists banned were J. B. Marks, president of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions and of the A.N.C. (Transvaal), Dan Tloome, C.N.E.T.U. secretary, I. Wolfson, treasurer of the Trades and Labour Council, other T.L.C. leaders such as R. Fleet, W. Kalk, E. Weinberg and B. du Toit. Some of the orders were extended to those who had long severed their connections with the Party, such as E. S. (Solly) Sachs, the secretary of the Garment Workers' Union.

The Guardian, the fighting democratic weekly, was suppressed. Its resourceful staff, including such outstanding Communist journalists as Brian Bunting, Lionel Forman, Govan Mbeki, Ruth First and M. P. Naicker, continued their work by producing *Advance*, *New Age* and eventually *Spark* as each succeeding journal was banned.

The movement also produced, during the fifites, journals of a high calibre, such as *Fighting Talk*, under the editorship of Ruth First, and *Liberation*, edited by Dan Tloome, whose reviews and analyses of current events played an important part in raising the political level of the movement as a whole.

The government arbitarily expelled Sam Kahn from Parliament and Fred Carneson from the Cape Provincial Council. The African voters of the Western Cape, responded by electing Brian Bunting to Parliament, and when he was also removed yet a third Communist was elected, Ray Alexander (Mrs. Ray Simons). But by this time the Suppression of Communism Act had been amended to make it illegal for Communists to be elected, and she was not allowed to take her seat in Parliament.

The Suppression of Communism Act was followed by a whole series of repressive laws – such as the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Public Safety Act, Sabotage Act and Terrorism Act – coupled with an unparalleled increase in the machinery of dictatorship – the army and the police – placing virtually unlimited powers in the hands of the state to detain, torture and murder political opponents and place the entire country under a permanent state of 'emergency' and martial law.

The Congress of the People

The oppressed majority and their organisations protested and resisted against every new step on the road of fascism. They went further, in deciding to convoke a true people's 'parliament' or constituent assembly; one which would embody in a single charter the aspirations of the people for a free and democratic South Africa.

At its annual conference at the end of 1953 the A.N.C., on the proposal of one of its most senior members, Professor Z. K. Matthews agreed to convene a mass representative gathering of men and women of all national groups in the country, to reach an understanding of the sort of South Africa which could enable its people to live together in

amity. This far-reaching proposal was given substance at a meeting of the executives of the A.N.C., the S.A.I.C., the Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Democrats, presided over by Chief Lutuli in March 1954. It was agreed to convene a 'Congress of the People' through which the masses themselves could express their own demands and wishes.

This decision generated widespread enthusiasm. The joint campaign committee organised thousands of meetings in every corner of the land; in urban and rural areas, in factories and mine-compounds, in the Reserves and villages – even in the prisons. Local Committees were set up in every corner of the country. They were enjoined to collect the people's demands, express their grievances, and forward them to the organisers for incorporation in a people's charter of rights. The campaign continued for more than a year.

On 26 June 1955, the Congress of the People was held at Kliptown, near Johannesburg. The preparations had been hampered by continuous police interference, with organisers arrested, meetings disrupted. Even on the eve of the Congress itself road-blocks had been set up and hundreds of delegates stopped. Yet, over 3,000 made their way to the great open square at Kliptown.

Many familiar faces were absent. Of the three men honoured by the gathering with the traditional African order 'Isitwalandwe' only one – Trevor Huddleston – was there to receive it. The other two, Chief Lutuli and Dr. Dadoo, were banned by Ministerial order, and hundreds were compelled to be absent by similar edicts. Yet it was the most representative gathering South Africa had ever seen: men and women of every national group – the great preponderance Africans – from almost every corner of the land.

The Freedom Charter

An army of armed police surrounded the gathering. The organisers had collected the thousands of demands and proposals and distilled their content into a single document which at the same time expressed the people's hatred of racist South Africa as it is, and their vision of the free South Africa of the future – the Freedom Charter.*

As the gathering began to discuss and adopt the clauses of this memorable document, the police moved in, demanding the names and addresses and searching the persons of the delegates. But the meeting went on with the work it had come to do. Under the sten-guns of the intruders, it proceeded to adopt the Charter, clause by clause, the adoption of each being punctuated by the singing of the people's anthem, *NkosiSikalel' iAfrika.*

The Freedom Charter, in the words of Nelson Mandela, is 'a beacon to the Congress movement and an inspiration to the people of South

*The text is reproduced in Appendix VIII

Africa'. For the first time all the major democratic forces in the country found a common programme. The Charter was subsequently endorsed by national conferences of the S.A. Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats; by the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions (S.A.C.T.U.) and in the 1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party.

Essentially, the South African Freedom Charter stems from the tradition of the proclamations of rights of the French and American revolutions and echoed in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. It demands rights which are honoured – at least in theory – in almost every country: an equal say for all in the process of making and administering laws, equal access to education, culture, and economic opportunities for all men and women, regardless of race or colour. The Charter is not a socialist manifesto. Its demands for the redivision of the land among those who work it, and the nationalisation of mineral wealth and monopoly-owned industry, are clearly attributable to the historical realities of a country where the white minority has forcibly appropriated nearly all the country's land and assets, rather than adherence to socialist doctrine on the part of all those who made and support the Charter.

Yet, in Mandela's words, the Freedom Charter is 'a revolutionary document precisely because the changes it envisages cannot be won without breaking up the economic and political set-up of present South Africa.' It was for this reason that the ruling classes of South Africa regarded the Charter as 'High Treason'.

The Treason Trial

To prove treason, however, in a court of law, required more than a government statement. The security police began an intensive drive to amass such evidence. The homes and offices of hundreds of Congress members and supporters, trade unionists, members of the peace movement and other bodies were raided and searched by the police; thousands of books and documents seized. After eighteen months they were ready to present their case in Court. On 6 December 1966, one hundred and fifty-six men and women from all over South Africa were arrested at dawn and flown to Johannesburg in military aircraft to face charges of Communism and High Treason. They included the foremost leaders of the Congress Alliance, provincial and branch leaders and rank-and-file members, men and women from every national group and walk of life.

The news of the trial aroused tremendous anger and indignation among the freedom-loving people of South Africa and their innumerable friends the world over. Bearing banners and placards – 'We Stand By Our Leaders' – thousands of Congress supporters gathered around the Johannesburg Drill Hall when the trial opened, to be dispersed by police baton charges and gunfire. The trial also evoked

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper

Workers of the World, Unite!

UMSEBENZI

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKER

Organ of the Communist Party

Incorporating the "International"

No. 422 | Capetown, Friday, 11 July, 1930 | Price 1d.

TONJENI AT GRAAFF REINET

Agitator Comes to Country Dorp

CONDITIONS IN A TYPICAL LOCATION

"Promoting Hostility"

Dear Comrade Editor,

Kindly publish this report in "Umsebenzi" for general information.

I arrived in Graaff-Reinet a few weeks ago and addressed some meetings in the location, which is inhabited both by Coloured and Native people. The location superintendent, a Europ[illegible] found that at the [illegible] them. If any person in the location, citizens of this country to learn that after he or she has faced severe ex[illegible]pense in building a house, falls into arrears with the rent, the earthly god can proceed to such house, throw out the belongings and lock it up. It makes no difference even if the husband is away or the wife is sick; the slave family must suffer and sleep outside. That is the kind of civilisa[illegible] in the form of a written note from [illegible] Although it [illegible]

Native women are carrying passes. After 9 p.m. Native women are arrested if found walking in the streets without passes. If any woman works in a kitchen up to 9.30 p.m., before she may leave for the location she must get a special pass

INKU[illegible]EKO

No. 19 | JOHANNESBURG, 6th JUNE, 1930 | 1d

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper

IN CAPETOWN

5,000 MARCH AGAINST PASSES

MOFUTSANYANA TAKES OVER "INKULULEKO" EDITORSHIP

Mr. E. T. Mofutsanyana has been released from his work as organiser for the Johannesburg District of the Communist Party in order to take over the post of Editor-in-Chief of "Inkululeko." He will assume his duties immediately.

Mr. Mofutsanyana is known throughout South Africa for his [illegible] and is one of the most respected leaders in the Afri[illegible]

THE Africans of Capetown demonstrated clearly their protest against Prime Minister Hofmeyr's undemocratic refusal to meet the Anti-Pass Deputation representing seven million Africans. They marched in their thousands through the main streets of Capetown, led by the Anti-Pass Deputation, to the Houses of Parliament. They carried banners inscribed "Down with the Pass Laws!" and "Democracy for All!"

The procession followed a mass meeting at the parade addressed by Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, Cr. R. V. Selope Thema, D. W. Bopape, R. D. Tabor, Moses Kotane and Mr. J. Palmer. When passing the Houses of Parliament, the demonstration took up the cry "Down with Pass Laws — we want Freedom." The noise from the procession penetrated into both Houses of Parliament and many Members of Parliament went out to watch it.

Chanting the African National anthem, "Nkosi Sikelela i Afrika," the procession turned down through Plein Street back to the parade, where the crowd gathered round the platform and, addressed by members of the deputation, passed resolutions protesting against the unwillingness of the acting Prime Minister to meet the deputation.

INTERVIEW

Immediately after their arrival in Capetown on Saturday, 2nd June, they contacted the Parliamentarians representing the Africans and asked them to arrange an interview with the Acting Prime Minister. On Monday they were told that the Acting Prime Minister, being very busy, was unable to meet them, but that he could meet them in Pretoria, and that he had since ted that the be had asked the Minister of Native Affairs to see the deputation. Further representations were made with the same results.

MAJOR VAN DER BYL

Meanwhile, members of the deputation had also been in contact with the Secretary for Native Affair, who had also explained the Acting Prime Minister's inability for the reason, stated. The Council had asked to see the Ministers of Native Affair- and Justice with Mr. Hofmeyr, but owing to pressure of Parliamentary duties, it was arranged that the two first-mentioned Ministers should meet the deputation separately, and an interview with Major Van der Byl was arranged for 9.45 a.h. on June 7th, notwithstanding the fact that the Minister had prior engagements which had to be cancelled.

The Minister was available at the appointed time, but the deputation failed to attend and gave no prior explanation to Major Van der Byl or his department. Later a letter was handed in to the effect that in a matter of such grave importance no audience would be satisfactory if not accorded by the Supreme Head. This attitude is totally at variance with a statement made on the day before to the Secretary for Native Affairs that, if the Acting Prime Minister was unable to receive the deputation they would make [illegible] them to arrange the interview. On Monday the deputation was informed by them that the Acting Prime Minister, owing to his parliamentary duties, was unable to see the deputation in Cape Town but was willing to meet them in Pretoria.

After discussing the situation the deputation decided to directly contact the Acting Prime Minister by a letter pointing out the importance of the Pass-Law question and the decision of the National Anti-Pass Conference. To this request the Acting Prime Minister replied that he was too busy, but said that the Deputation would meet the Minister for Native Affairs.

On the point made by the Bureau of Information that the Deputation had agreed to meet the Minister of Native Affairs and t[illegible]

MORE 1425 ARRESTS

Four Africans have been summoned to appear in the Germiston Magistrate's Court on Thursday, June 21st. They are Messrs. Arthur Damons, Daniel Lunga, Lemos Phillips and Mr. Zondo.

It is alleged that they contravened Regulation 1425 of the War Emergency Regulations, by be ding a meeting of the Communist Party at Germiston, attended by more than twenty persons, on gold-proclaimed land.

Vorster Murders "SPARK"

WE SAY GOODBYE BUT WE'LL BE BACK

SPARK

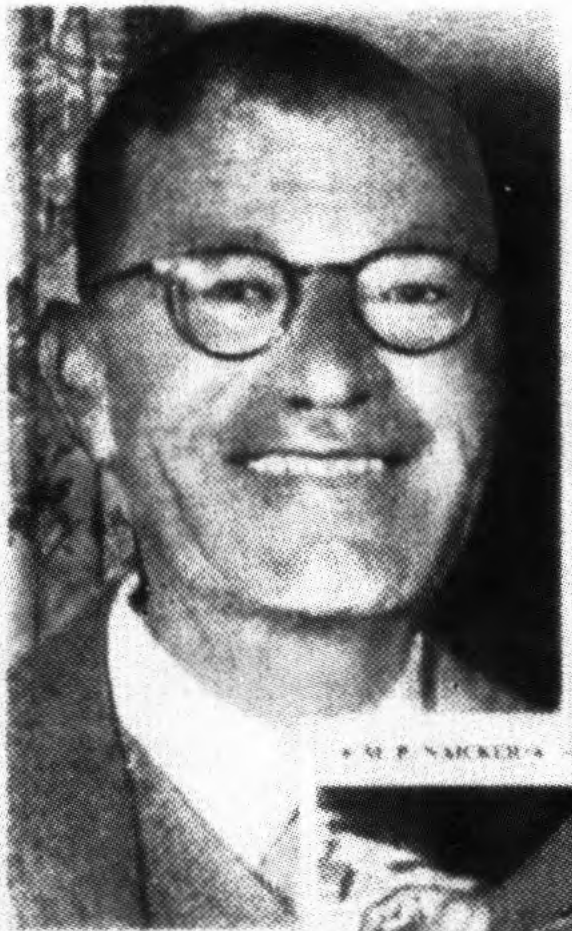
New Series, Vol. 1 No. 22 PRICE 5c March 31, 1965

VORSTER HAS STRANGLED SPARK AND THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF "THE PAPER" SOUTH AFRICA'S READERS HAVE COME TO KNOW AS FRESH EACH WEEK. Three weeks ago, [illegible] which took place on April 1, [illegible] made it practically impossible for us to continue. It left us [illegible] a week or [illegible].

So now we say goodbye. We will [illegible] return as [illegible] but this is the end of the road. We hope that others will be able to [illegible] the way we have done, while we appear as a free South Africa. Then we promise to be yet bigger and brighter and to come out not weekly, but every day.

- Thank you for [illegible] supported us during all the years.
- Thank you to the few great [illegible] who have helped us make SPARK work. It would [illegible] enough to write. Goodbye and we will [illegible] again. WE'LL BE BACK.

* FRED CARNEGIE *



* G. P. NAICKER *

* EDWARD MOKAE *

* BRIAN BUNTING *

* [illegible] *

The Story of the Communist Party.

It is Forty years since the Communist Party of South Africa was formed, on July 29, 1921.

Never was any Organisation so much hated by the bosses and the rulers of this country as the Communist Party. Never was any Organisation so much loved by the workers of the towns and poor people of the countryside, by the oppressed millions of Non-Whites.

The reason was not far to seek.

In every struggle of the people - - against racial discrimination, poverty and oppression - - the Communist Party fought in the front ranks.

The African people will never forget the Communist Party. They remember how, for many years, it led the fight against Pass Laws. They recall the name of the great hero and martyr, Johannes Nkosi, who was brutally murdered by the Police in the mass demonstration against Passes at Durban on December 16, 1930. They remember that the Communist Party was the first to organise African Trade Unions to win higher wages, better jobs and better conditions for the working class, led by pioneer Trade Unionists like Gana Makabeni, Albert Nzula, Moses Kotane and J. B. Marks. Ceaselessly the Communist Party worked to arouse the people to unite, to build the African National Congress, to demand their rights for land, bread and freedom, for votes for all in a democratic South Africa based on equality of rights and opportunities for everyone.

The Indian people of this country cannot forget how under the inspiration of men like Dr. Dadoo and other Indian Communists, as well as Non-Communists, the whole struggle of the Indian people was raised to new heights; how they fought for a United Front with the African and Coloured people for EQUALITY and FREEDOM for ALL. The Coloured people know the role the Communists have played in fighting against Aphartheid and bad conditions. They remember the part played by pioneers like Jimmy la Guma, John Gomas and Ray Alexander in organising the poorest-paid Coloured workers.

The Communist Party was a Non-Racial Organisation - the first in this country to admit all men and women regardless of race or colour, on a basis of complete equality. The White workers who today stand aloof or even hostile towards the aspirations of the Non-White masses should remember that it was Communists like Bill Andrews, the father of the Labour movement, Ivon Jones, S. P. Bunting, and many others who pioneered and built up the Trade Unions and working class political movements which are responsible for the higher wages and better conditions which they enjoy today.

SWORN ENEMY OF NATIONALISM

The Communists stand for the direct opposite of everything the Nationalists Party Stands for.

Instead of Apartheid — Unity and friendship of all South Africans, Black and White.

Instead of Oppression — Freedom and Equality — Freedom of Speech, Assembly, Press. Organisation and Movement; Equality of Rights and Opportunities

No wonder the Nationalists hate the Communists so much!

Headed by men like "Sjambok" Swart, the present State President, and Hitler - lovers like Verwoerd, the Nationalist Party swore it would destroy Communism in South Africa.

In 1950 they passed the "Suppression of Communism Act", which declared the Communist Party unlawful.

They "listed" every member or Supporter of the C. P. S. A. they khew.

They forced hundreds of Communists to resign from the Congress movement and the Trade Unions; banned them from attending gatherings; forced people like Sam Kahn, Brian Bunting and Ray Alexander out of Parliament where they had been elected by the votes of the people, and Fred Carneson out of the Provincial Council.

Communists were victimised out of their jobs, and like other patriots and freedom fighters they have been exiled from their homes to far away places or even out of the country.

By methods like these, the Nats. thought they could kill the spirit of Communism in South Africa. But they have failed hopelessly.

The former Communist Party of South Africa was disolved - but a new one - the South African Communist Party - has grown up in its place to carry on with the struggle and carry it on to victory.

And all South Africa knows that - shoulder to shoulder with Non-Communist democrats and fighters for freedom - the Communists have continued to play a glorious part in every great movement of the masses against the hated Nationalist regime. In the Defiance Campain and the Congress of the People, the movement against Passes, the Bus boycotts, the Treason Trial, the Maritzburg Conference and many another stirring chapter of South African History, the Communists have played a full and exemplary part.

NO 1 INKULULEKO – FREEDOM JULY 1971.

ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

A PAPER IS A WEAPON

The publication of the first issue of INKULULULEKO - FREEDOM as a regular underground journal of our Central Committee represents a big step forward for our Party.

In the new conditions which face us, organisation is everything. Without it all the undoubted anger of our people cannot be directed to deal effective blows to the enemy. The spreading of understanding is the very beginning of organisation. That is why a newspaper is an organiser. A grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory and its application to our conditions not only provides the true guidelines for action but also reinforces the conviction that the ending of all forms of exploitation -economic, racial and political - is both historically necessary and inevitable.

Around such a revolutionary organ there must grow a bond between all units and advanced representatives of the liberation and working class movements It must become a spur to those who are still seeking a path of struggle and the thread which directs them to revolutionary commitment, organisation and action.

INKULU LEKO - FREEDOM continues in the great tradition of our Party's journal and newspapers, like "The International", "Unsebenzi", and "Inkululeko and fighting organs like the "Guardian", "Liberation", "Fighting Talk" and others which have throughout our history played an indispensable role in furthering the revolutionary tasks which face our people.

The ideas which will fill the pages of this journal are hated by the enemy because they are liberating ideas. The enemy will hound you and persecute you if they catch you spreading it. But your battle cannot be won without risks and without sacrifice. Of course you must be careful in the way you use it and if you work cleverly you can outwit the enemy and his agents and informers.

"INKULULEKO - FREEDOM"IS YOUR PAPER ! SPREAD IT EVERYWHERE !
ORGANISE AND EDUCATE FOR THE REVOLUTION !

WE CELEBRATE OUR FIFTIETH YEAR

Fifty years have passed since our party - the oldest Communist Party on the African continent - was born on 30 July, 1921. We look back on those years with pride and they inspire us to face the future with confidence.

In its first manifesto our party pledged itself to struggle despite "any sacrifices it may be called upon to undergo, to hasten the time when mankind shall no longer cower under the bludgeon of the oppressor, when the necessities and amenities of life, the comfort and culture, the honour and

passionate interest and support among broad democratic circles abroad.

The prosecution – headed until his death by the Nazi ex-Minister of Justice Pirow – set out to prove that the Freedom Charter was a blueprint for a 'Communist state', to be attained by force and violence. These contentions were torn to shreds by a brilliant team of defence lawyers, including Bram Fischer, and by the accused themselves, whose ranks included such able legal men as Duma Nokwe, Joe Slovo, Nelson Mandela, O. R. Tambo and J. Matthews.

The preparatory examination and trial lasted from December 1956 until March 1961, when all the accused were found not guilty and discharged. But by that time the Nationalist Party had abolished all tracks of the rule of law and political victims could be deatl with outside the Courts.

Hardly one of the treason trial accused escaped punishment in the sixties. Some were placed under house-arrest and other restrictions. Many were jailed for life and other long-term sentences. Others were forced into exile from the country. Many were detained and tortured, some murdered.

In addition to convicting those accused, the government intended the treason trial to intimidate the resistance movement, to break down its unity, to smear the movement as 'Communist', and in the process to divide the Communists among the accused from their colleagues. In each and every one of these objectives it failed miserably. In the long years of the treason trial the leaders of the different organisations, of different communities and ideological outlooks, came to known one another better, to respect one another and learn from one another. Not a single one of those accused took the road of asking for a separate trial or 'disassociating' himself from Communism.

Upsurge on Every Front

Far from breaking the spirit of the people, the years of the treason trial saw an upsurge of mass activity on almost every front.

There were historic *bus boycotts* in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, Evaton, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth and elsewhere where tens of thousands of people acted in solidarity.

African women carried on a stubborn and militant struggle against the extension of the pass laws to them. Following the great demonstration of August 1956 in which 20,000 women converged on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the A.N.C. Women's League and the non-racial Federation of South African Women led militant protests, not only in Johannesburg and Durban, where thousands were arrested, but in many country areas of the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Cape and Natal, such as Lichtenburg, Standerton, Balfour and Zeerust, as the government implemented its policy of issuing women's passes piecemeal, beginning in the rural areas. Thousands of women were arrested and sentenced for destroying their passes.

Workers' Movements and S.A.C.T.U.

Faced with rising living costs, though all strikes of Africans were and remain illegal, numerous strikes in fact took place for higher wages, followed by mass arrests and imprisonments. Following the precedent of the first Freedom Day, the workers came out time and again at the call of the Congress movement (joined from 1955 by S.A.C.T.U. – the newly founded S.A. Congress of Trade Unions) in massive 'stay-at-homes' to back their political demands. As Sol Dubula later commented in *The African Communist* (No. 24, 1966) the years of the treason trial were

> all the years in which, for the first time in our country, the *national general political strike* made its appearance. Time and again the great industrial complexes of the Witwatersrand, the Eastern Cape, Natal and elsewhere were brought to a standstill, as hundreds of thousands of African and other workers answered the Congress call, and stayed at home. They struck for basic political demands, despite lack of recognized trade unions, loss of pay, police intimidation – and despite repeated scabbing appeals by most of the people who now lead P.A.C.

S.A.C.T.U. was formed following the cowardly desertion of principle by the leaders of the Trades and Labour Council, who dissolved that body to establish the colour-bar 'South African Council of Trade Unions' whose constitution excluded African workers. The Unions which had fought against this surrender joined in 1955 to join the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade unions to set up, on 5 March 1955, the first South African trade union federation truly to fight both the political and industrial colour bars, in word and in deed, the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

Rejecting the treacherous slogan 'No politics in the trade unions' S.A.C.T.U. boldly tackled the great main problems – the industrial colour bar, the pass laws, the absence of political and civil rights – of the mass of workers, as well as demands for better wages and conditions. It adopted the Freedom Charter and associated itself in the Congress Alliance. It launched a major campaign, around the demand for a national minimum wage of £1 a day, for the organisation of the mass of unorganised workers in town and country. Its leading organs – unlike those of the former T.L.C. – reflected the composition of the working class of our country, including, as well as White, Coloured and Indian workers, African trade unionists such as Leslie Massina, J. Gaetsewe, and M. W. Shope (successively general secretary) and S. Dhlamini (national president).

Rural Revolt

The closing years of the fifties were a period in which increasingly the oppressed people of the rural areas fought back against the government, involving increasingly revolutionary forms of mass action.

In 1958 massive unrest erupted in *Zeerust*, following the

women's destruction of pass books at Linokana, Gopane, Witkleigat and Motsoedi, and the deportation of a patriotic chief. The people set up their own courts, and tried and executed four pro-government quislings. Massive state reprisals followed.

In May of the same year the people of *Sekhukhuniland* revolted against the imposition of 'Bantu authorities' as a first step towards the creation of a 'Bantustan'. Similar battles were fought in Zululand, Tembuland and Pondoland. The setting up of people's courts and the sentencing of traitors initiated in Zeerust was emulated in Tembuland and Zululand. The white state suppressed these risings ferociously, many peasant leaders being deported, sentenced to long prison terms and their homes burnt down. In Sekhukhuniland sixteen peasants, including a woman, were sentenced to death and executed.

Writing in *The African Communist* (No. 11, 1962) L. Legwa wrote:

> 'Particularly bitter struggles took place in *Pondoland*, a portion of the Transkei which retained independence until 1894 when the British government forced its annexation to the Cape by coercion and fraud . . . The whole district of Bizana fell into the hands of the *mountain men* – the freedom fighters. They set up people's courts and levied taxes on black and white in the area.
>
> The government resorted to extensive military actions. A state of emergency – which has still not been lifted – was declared over the whole area of the Transkeian Territory. More than 5,000 peasant leaders were arrested and detained. Hundreds were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Thirty-two leaders were sentenced to death . . .'

In addition to these major struggles, innumerable campaigns were carried out in various fields. A successful potato boycott (in protest against slave conditions on potato farms); a boycott of nationalist firms – later to be echoed on an international scale – vigorous action against the 'Western areas removal scheme' which destroyed whole African living areas in Johannesburg – all these and many other activities made up the pattern of political life in the fifties as reflected in the columns of *The Guardian* and its successors, analysed and evaluated in such periodicals as *Fighting Talk* and *Liberation*.

In all these and many other epic struggles of the fifties, the Communist Party and its members played a worthy role. As Bram Fischer later pointed out in his great court address while on trial for his life (28 March 1966) he realised that as he became more deeply involved with the Congress movement of those years – 'that is, the movement for freedom and equal human rights for all':

> that it was always members of the Communist Party who seemed prepared, regardless of cost, to sacrifice most; to give of their best, to face the greatest dangers, in the struggle against poverty and discrimination.

The Sixties – and Armed Struggle

By the end of the fifties it was plain that a showdown was impending between the fascist rulers of South Africa and the oppressed people. The great series of militant non-violent struggles, general strikes and boycotts had succeeded in arousing the people and mobilising them behind the Congress banner as never before. But neither these campaigns nor the ever-mounting world chorus of condemnation of apartheid had succeeded in wringing a single concession from the Nationalist Party government, which merely reacted by redoubling its methods and machinery of terror. It became increasingly clear to the masses and their leaders that new methods, a new approach, was needed in the fight against the colonialist-fascist regime. The violent struggles of the rural people, especially in Pondoland, unarmed or ill-armed as they were, had shown the way.

The new phase of the struggle was precipitated by an unexpected and tragic event – the massacre at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960.

As in every developed country various splits and divisions existed within the ranks of the oppressed and exploited people. Various 'left' or 'right' factions split away from the main body of the liberation movements, arising from petit-bourgeois confusion or outside intrigues. For example in the Cape, especially among Coloured intellectuals, a body styling itself the 'Non-European Unity Movement', largely under trotskyite influence had a long and malodorous record of sabotaging, under ultra-revolutionary slogans, every struggle launched by the Congress movement or the Communist Party. Several right-wing splinter movements had begun in the A.N.C., invariably under the slogans of anti-Communism and alleged Indian or European influence in the A.N.C.

In the late fifties a new group of this type made its appearance in the A.N.C. Calling themselves 'Africanists' they launched a campaign of vicious calumny against the Lutuli-Sisulu leadership and the Freedom Charter. At the end of 1959 the Africanists, having failed dismally to gain support within the A.N.C., broke away to form their own organisation, the 'Pan-Africanist Congress'.

The Sharpeville Massacre, March 1960

Little more might have been heard of this body had it not been for the grim incidents of the following March. Learning that the A.N.C. had decided to launch a fresh major offensive against the pass laws at the end of that month, the P.A.C. adventurously called its own 'anti-pass campaign' a week earlier. Africans were summoned to go to local police stations on that day and deliver up their passes in 'a non-violent way'. For the most part, the call fell on deaf ears, the African workers awaiting a call from their recognised and tested leaders. But in two areas, Sharpeville in the Transvaal and Langa in the Cape – in both of which A.N.C. organisation was weak – crowds of Africans did

peacefully assemble at the police stations. The reaction of the police shocked South Africa and the world, exposing the police state in all its naked brutality. They opened fire with sten guns mounted on trucks, shooting the fleeing crowds in their backs, killing and wounding people indiscriminately.

The reaction was angry and immediate. In answer to the call of President Lutuli, Africans throughout the country staged a highly-effective one-day strike, and thousands followed his example by burning their passes. Africans in Cape Town came out on strike for more than two weeks.

War on the People

The government declared war on the people. A state of emergency was proclaimed. At least twenty thousand young Africans were indiscriminately arrested and a further two thousand 'politicals' – men and women of all national groups known or thought to be active in the A.N.C. and other democratic organisations – arrested and detained for months without trial. The African National Congress (and for good measure the P.A.C. as well) were declared illegal organisations.

It was this crisis, coming on top of all the previous acts of repression, which convinced both the masses of oppressed people and their leaders that the days when resistance could be confined to 'non-violent' and 'legal' methods had gone forever. The A.N.C., despite the loss of so many of its leaders and cadres, functioned throughout the emergency. The Communist Party – which had already illegally, in October 1959, produced the first issue of *The African Communist*, in Johannesburg – came out with its first illegal leaflets for mass distribution in all the main industrial regions of the country.

The leaders of the liberation movement and the Communist Party – both those in detention and those who had evaded the police net and were living in hiding – came to the same conclusion. It was necessary to abandon 'non-violence' as the sole means of struggle, and to begin preparations to meet state violence and terror with retaliatory violence.

The Maritzburg Conference

These conclusions were strengthened by the temper of the masses as the historic 'all-in' African conference held in Maritzburg under the leadership of Nelson Mandela in March 1961 protested against the so-called 'referendum' of white voters under which South Africa was to be declared a 'Republic'. The conference called for a National Convention to decide on a new constitution for South Africa, failing which a general strike would be called to co-incide with the declaration of the Republic on 31 May, 1961.

In the event, the Republican 'celebrations' were overshadowed by the placing of the country on a war basis to smash the strike. Despite all these repressive measures – and the treacherous scabbing activities of

such bodies as the P.A.C. and the trotskyites – tens of thousands of workers responded to the strike call throughout the country. It was the last peaceful general strike call issued by the liberation movement. During the years 1951-1961 the working class of South Africa had, time and again, shown its magnificent solidarity and spirit in a whole series of political strikes – without strike funds and facing grave risks of victimisation. These strikes had been of immense value and importance. But the time had come for new tactics and methods.

Umkhonto We Sizwe

> The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices – submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa.
>
> Manifesto of *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, 16 December 1961.

At the end of 1961, backed by the African National Congress and the Communist Party, a new organisation made its appearance on South African soil: Umkhonto we Sizwe, Spear of the Nation. It announced its existence not only in words but also in deeds – a series of sabotage explosions in all parts of the country.

The explosions were accompanied by a manifesto declaring that in the situation of terror existing in the country the masses could no longer rely on peaceful methods of struggle but would hit back with every means in their power.

Umkhonto we Sizwe's sabotage operations were never intended as an end in themselves but as a stage towards the building of a *people's army of liberation* in South Africa. They served notice of the end of an era of militant, but non-violent struggles alone; the opening shots in what will undoubtedly prove a long and bitter, but certainly in the end victorious, war of liberation.

The path of armed resistance and struggle was one not lightly or easily taken by the South African people's liberation movements and their Communist Party. For many years they had striven by every possible means, with indomitable courage, patience and persistence to achieve a non-violent transition to people's power. Civil war has been forced upon our country by the racial arrogance, greed and ruthlessness of the colonialist ruling class.

The 1962 Programme

The general line and direction of Party policy was fully confirmed by the membership at the fifth national conference held illegally in Johannesburg in 1962.

The Conference performed an enormous service to the working class and oppressed people of our country by adopting the new Party Programme – *The Road to South African Freedom*,* – intensive

*The Introduction to the Programme is reproduced in Appendix XI.

discussion of a first draft in every unit and among non-Party circles of revolutionary workers. Hundreds of amendments were submitted, considered and in many cases incorporated.

The Programme reaffirmed the Party's adherence to the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, which were briefly described and summarised (an essential need in a country where the dissemination of Marxist ideas had been prohibited for over a decade.)

It proceeded to give a clear Marxist analysis of the character of South African society – a *special type of colonialism* 'in which the oppressing White nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them'. Hence:

> *As its immediate and foremost task, the South African Communist Party works for a united front of national liberation. It strives to unite all sections and classes of oppressed and democratic people for a national democratic revolution to destroy White domination. The main content of this Revolution will be the national liberation of the African people. Carried to its fulfilment, this revolution will at the same time put an end to every sort of race discrimination and privilege. The revolution will restore the land and the wealth of the country to the people, and guarantee democracy, freedom and equality of rights, and opportunities to all. The Communist Party has no interests separate from those of the working people. The Communists are sons and daughters of the people, and share with them the over-riding necessity to put an end to the suffering and humiliation of apartheid. The destruction of colonialism and the winning of national freedom is the essential condition and the key for future advance to the supreme aim of the Communist Party: the establishment of a socialist South Africa, laying the foundation of a classless, communist society.*

The 1962 Programme marked a major advance in the theoretical development of the South African Communist Party, and indeed – as in its section on 'The African Revolution' – made a significant contribution to the development of Marxist thought throughout the continent.

This was continued and greatly amplified by the party's journal, *The African Communist*, which for more than a decade now has helped to spread the enlightening ideas of Marxism-Leninism in Africa and among Africans and other interested thinkers in every part of the world.

An important statement, *The Revolutionary Way Out** published early in 1963 applied the thinking of the Party programme to a detailed analysis of events taking place in the country.

Heavy Blows

A whole series of heavy blows was sustained by the Communist Party

*Full text in Appendix XII.

and the entire liberation movement during the first half of the sixties, at the hands of the fascist government and its secret police, modelled on the Gestapo.

The government was determined to smash every vestige of the valiant resisters who had so skilfully utilised every possibility of legal protest in the previous decade. All the journalists who had produced *The Guardian* and its successors down the years, as well as *Fighting Talk*, *Liberation* and other democratic journals, were served with ministerial notices preventing them from engaging in any sort of journalistic activity.

Many leading cadres were placed under house-arrest. Intensive efforts were made to infiltrate police spies and provocators into the ranks of the movement. A very substantial addition was made to the funds and activities of the special branch of the police.

Counter-measures were taken by the liberation movement. A number of leading members, including O. R. Tambo, M. M. Kotane, J. B. Marks and Y. M. Dadoo were sent out of the country to conduct various aspects of the work of the movement in exile. Numbers of young militants were recruited and sent abroad for combat training as guerillas of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Following the example of Nelson Mandela, a number of leaders of the Party and the Congress organisations were directed to leave their homes and assume new identities and disguises. Secret headquarters were set up at a farm in Rivonia, near Johannesburg and elsewhere.

Due to inexperience and to some extent underestimation of the enemy, many of these measures proved inadequate. Following a successful tour of Africa and elsewhere on behalf of the A.N.C. Mandela returned to his underground work, but he was captured by the police in Natal.

In July 1963 a serious reverse was suffered when police raided the Party headquarters at Rivonia. What followed is described in the resolution* adopted by the Central Committee of the Party on its fiftieth anniversary:

> Following a raid on the underground Party headquarters at Rivonia a number of the most outstanding revolutionary leaders, both Communists and non-Communists, were arrested and tried on charges of planning to overthrow the state by armed revolutionary struggle. Despite world-wide protests, including a 106-1 vote at the United Nations General Assembly, 8 of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment: Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Mhlaba, Goldberg, Kathrada, Motsoaledi and Mlangeni.
>
> Hundreds of Congressites and Communists were detained without trial, subjected to prolonged torture and some even murdered in the police cells.
>
> The great majority of those detained refused to testify against their comrades, even to the point of death. But a few were broken by the police,

*The full text is reproduced in Appendix XV.

resulting in yet further trials, such as that of Mkwayi, Kitson and others, also resulting in life sentences, the execution of the trade unionists Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba in November 1964, and the rounding up of thousands of Party and Congress supporters, and trade unionists throughout the country.

A further heavy blow was sustained by the Party in 1965 with the arrest and sentence to life imprisonment of Comrade Abram Fischer who had been living in hiding and leading the underground work of the Party at that time.

Looksmart Ngudle, Babla Saloojee, Caleb Mayekiso, Alpheus Maliba, are but a few of the many Congressites, trade unionists, Communists and other political prisoners who died in the cells under torture and were alleged by the police to have taken their own lives.

It is impossible here to enumerate all the brave sons and daughters of South Africa who have been killed, imprisoned, deported to remote areas, and otherwise victimised by the fascists for fighting for the freedom of their country and their people.

At home, the revolutionary workers have patiently rebuilt the machinery of the Party, learning from past mistakes and creatively devising new methods and strategies to meet the terrorism of the police state. A number of Party leaflets distributed in the country, especially in the later sixties, their widespread distribution, and the inability of the police to make any arrests, attesting to the courage and skill of the comrades responsible.

A further tribute to the resilience and growing vitality of the Party was the successful holding of an augmented meeting of the Central Committee in 1970.

The 1970 Augmented Meeting of the Central Committee

The 1970 Augmented Central Committee Meeting was an important milestone in the history of the Party. Since the last National Conference of the Party in 1962, several full Central Committee meetings had been held. A regularly functioning and active Executive had been appointed to direct and intensify the activities of the Party.

But the particularly difficult conditions facing the Party, especially the widespread dispersion of cadres, made it impossible to convene a meeting sufficiently representative in character, which could review the activities of the Executive, assess the lessons of our successes and failures, and decide the future policy and leadership of the Party.

Formidable tasks therefore faced the Augmented Meeting. Following widespread discussion at all levels of the Party, the Meeting – comprising a majority of non-members of the Executive, including a number of Party members who had already participated in armed struggle – was called to review comprehensive organisational and political reports from the Executive.

Far-reaching developments in South Africa, on the African continent and in the international situation face the Party with new problems and

tasks. The hard and dangerous work of rebuilding the Party's organisational structure under conditions of ferocious terror; the unfolding of the armed struggle for the advance of the South African revolution; the mobilisation of the working class and rural masses, and the various strata of oppressed people; the strengthening of the national liberation movement headed by the African National Congress; the unfolding of a broad people's alliance in Southern Africa against the combined forces of South African imperialism, Portuguese colonialism and the illegal Smith regime – backed by international finance-capital; these and related problems occupied the focus of the meeting's deliberations.

In addition, the meeting reviewed and assessed the Party's international policy. It endorsed the policy and activities of the Executive in relation to the international Communist movement, and decided upon measures to strengthen our activities in this field.*

The meeting adopted a number of major policy decisions, reflected in the resolutions. After re-electing the General Secretary and Chairman of the Party, it proceeded, by democratic means, to appoint a new Executive.

The Party and the Armed Struggle

The main political resolution of the meeting was summed up in a rousing 'Call to the People of South Africa', the text of which is appended to this volume.** Two important clauses read:

> Paying tribute to the heroism of the fighting men of Umkhonto we Sizwe, we pledge unqualified support for the liberation army in its aims to recruit and train guerilla fighters, to spread the area of guerilla war to the heart of the Republic.
>
> Believing firmly that the building of our Party as the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working class is a vitally important contribution to the victory in the common struggle, the meeting instructs the CC to direct its main efforts to the reconstruction of the Party at home as an organisation of professional revolutionaries, closely in contact with the working class and peasantry and able to carry on the propaganda and organisation of the Party in the face of police terror.

A good deal of the discussion at the meeting was focussed on the strategy and perspectives of armed struggle under South African conditions, on the basis of a document on this theme circulated by the executive and in the light of the combat experience already gained.

The meeting adopted a resolution setting forth a number of guidelines on this question, pointing out that the armed struggle was

*A good idea of the Party's general line of policy on these questions is contained in J. B. Marks' address, as head of the SACP delegation at the 1969 Moscow conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, and reproduced in Appendix XIII.

**Appendix XIV.

not to be approached as a purely military question, but that operations must be planned to arouse and organise the masses. Any theory that localised operations of fulltime guerillas would in itself generate revolution was rejected; as also was the concept that organised armed activity should await complete political mobilisation and advanced nationwide organisation.

While the principal operations would be initiated in and based on rural areas, armed activities in the towns were an indispensible 'corollary front'.

Emphasis was laid on the character of the fighting force as one of political cadres, subordinate to the political movement, and based on conviction and commitment rather than traditional bourgeois-type army discipline. Political and military leadership must be co-ordinated and eventually integrated.

The Augmented Central Committee Meeting also devoted much of its attention to the complex and exacting problems of organisation, propaganda and the maintenance of high standards of conduct and discipline in the present testing conditions. A series of practical decisions were taken on these subjects, as well as on the strengthening of the liberation alliance and the raising to yet higher level the unity of Communist and non-Communist fighters for national liberation which has characterised the development of the movement in South Africa.

The Party's Fiftieth Anniversary

Messages of congratulation, greeting and good will were received from all over the world on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Party's foundation, 30 July 1971. The executives of the African National Congress of South Africa, the South African Congress of Trade Unions sent cordial greetings. Messages of solidarity and support were received from the fraternal Parties of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist countries of Europe as well from these of all the principal capitalist countries. From Asia the Party received messages from Vietnam, Korea, Japan, India and other fraternal parties; from Canada and the U.S.A. and a number of South American Parties.

In the Soviet Union a special all-day seminar was devoted to the occasion, opened by Central Committee member Academician A. M. Rumyantsev and addressed by S.A.C.P. chairman J. B. Marks and leading Soviet scholars. (The text of Comrade Rumyantsev's address is published in full in the *African Communist*, No. 47, Fourth Quarter 1971).

A special session of the African National Congress Youth and Students' summer seminar held in the German Democratic Republic in July/August 1971 on the theme "Problems of National Liberation" was also devoted to a discussion of the history of the S.A.C.P., its contribution to the national liberation movement in South Africa

and its role in the international Communist movement.

Inkululeko – Freedom

Inside South Africa itself, implementing the decision of the Central Committee to concentrate efforts on reconstruction of the Party at home, the Party produced stickers, reading 50 FIGHTING YEARS – 1921-1971 which appeared in public places throughout the country. The occassion was marked too by the publication of the first issue of the new underground journal, *Inkululeko-Freedom.*

Perhaps it is appropriate to leave the last word in this chronicle of the heroic and still continuing work of the South African Communist Party to the anonymous authors of this brave new paper.

A Paper is a Weapon proclaims the editorial:

> The publication of the first issue of 'Inkululeko-Freedom' as a regular underground journal of our Central Committee represents a big step forward for our Party.
>
> In the new conditions which face us, organisation is everything. Without it all the undoubted anger of our people cannot be directed to deal effective blows to the enemy. The spreading of understanding is the very beginning of organisation. That is why a newspaper is an organiser. A grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory and its application to our conditions not only provides the true guidelines for action but also reinforces the conviction that the ending of all forms of exploitation – economic, racial and political – is both historically necessary and inevitable.
>
> Around such a revolutionary organ there must grow a bond between all units and advanced representatives of the liberation and working class movements. It must become a spur to those who are still seeking a path of struggle and the thread which directs them to revolutionary commitment, organisation and action.
>
> *Inkululeko-Freedom* continues in the great tradition of our Party's journal and newspapers, like *The International, Umsebenzi* and *Inkululeko* and fighting organs like the *Guardian, Liberation, Fighting Talk* and others which have throughout our history played an indispensable role in furthering the revolutionary tasks which face our people.
>
> The ideas which will fill the pages of this journal are hated by the enemy because they are liberating ideas. The enemy will hound you and persecute you if they catch you spreading it. But your battle cannot be won without risks and without sacrifice. Of course you must be careful in the way you use it and if you work cleverly you can outwit the enemy and his agents and informers.

INKULULEKO-FREEDOM IS YOUR PAPER! SPREAD IT EVERYWHERE! ORGANISE AND EDUCATE FOR THE REVOLUTION!

The journal outlines the history of white conquest and domination in South Africa, and then shows how the Communist Party has from its inception fought to bring about a revolutionary change, in association

with other liberation organisations in South Africa and with the world Communist and anti-imperialist movement. A brief history of the Communist Party concludes with a summary of the decisions taken at the recent meeting of the Party's Central Committee.

The journal declares:

On this our fiftieth anniversity, the Central Committee and our whole Party salutes those who are constructing socialism and fighting imperialism. We reaffirm our confidence in the principles of Communism and internationalism, of victory for our people and for the working class and pledge

to intensify our efforts – whatever the sacrifices – to help liberate the mass of our oppressed people from race domination and to bring about an independent South Africa free from all forms of exploitation.

unqualified support for the armed revolutionary cadres of the whole movement to spread the areas of armed combat to the heart of our country.

the intensification of our efforts to build our Party as the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working class and to fortify it in the face of police terror.

the strengthening still further of the unity of all true patriotic forces as expressed in the alliance headed by the African National Congress.

'WE CALL UPON THE WORKING PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY AND ESPECIALLY THE WORKERS AND OPPRESSED AFRICAN, COLOURED AND INDIAN PEOPLE TO UNITE THEIR RANKS TO RESIST TYRANNICAL DOMINATION IN EVERY SPHERE AND BY EVERY MEANS AND TO WORK FOR THE CONQUEST OF POWER BY THE PEOPLE.

'LONG LIVE COMMUNISM AND TRUE INTERNATIONALISM!

'LONG LIVE THE ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTIC FORCES!

'LONG LIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!'

(The Appendices are listed on p. VIII)

APPENDICES

I

THE BOLSHEVIKS ARE COMING

(Leaflet issued by the International Socialist League in 1918. For distributing this leaflet in Maritzburg, its author, D. I. Jones and L. Green were arrested and unsuccessfully prosecuted.)

To the Workers of South Africa – Black and White:

A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Bolshevism!

What is this Bolshevism that the ruling class is so much afraid of?

Why do they send British armies to Russia to fight the Bolsheviks?

Have they not had enough killing? Or is it a thirst for righteousness that makes them pack Tommy Atkins off to freeze in the snows of Archangel, just when he was looking forward to Home and Blighty?

The Czar massacred half a million nomads in Southern Russia in one swoop. They did not send an army against him.

Why then are they so scared of Bolshevism? Why do they turn pale at its shadows as at the ghosts of murdered men? Why? We will tell you why!

The Great War of Nations is over and the Class War against Labour has openly begun.

Bolshevism means the rule of the working class. And when the workers rule, the capitalists cannot carry on their robber system any more.

A Campaign of Lies

Workers! Do not be misled when the capitalist press reviles the Bolsheviks. They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the fat money bags they lent to the Czar to crush the Russian people.

They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the rich mines and factories which the Russian working men are now working for themselves; and the land which forty million peasants are farming in common under the Soviet Republic.

They slander Bolsheviks because they fear you will follow suit. They are afraid the workers in South Africa will also become free and independent.

Bolshevism Means Labour on Top

The workers of Russia and Germany are forming themselves into Soviets – that is: Councils of Workmen.

They are taking over the control of the country into their own hands – the hands of the great wage-earning proletariat. That means the end of the profiteering system, the end of the capitalist exploitation of wage-labour for profit.

Why have the workers of Russia and Germany to shed their blood?

Because the capitalist class of all countries will sooner tear the people to pieces with their cannons rather than let the people rule. The workers are the people.

Remember the massacre of the workers in Johannesburg in 1913 and in Bloemfontein in February.

Down with British Militarism! It is a weapon to crush the workers.

Down with Allied intervention in Russia!

Down with the capitalist class in all countries!

The hope of the workers is coming from Bolshevism. The free commonwealth of labour is an actual fact in Russia today.

Bolshevism means the victory of the wage-earners. It will soon spread to Britain, France, America and throughout the world.

Get ready for the World-wide Republic of Labour.

The way to get ready is to combine in the workshops. Combine as workers, no matter what colour.

Remember that an injury to one is an injury to all, be he black or white.

While the black worker is oppressed the white worker cannot be free.

Before Labour can emancipate itself black workers as well as white must combine in one organisation of Labour, irrespective of craft, colour or creed.

This is Bolshevism: the Solidarity of Labour.

Workers of the world, unite!

You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win!

(The International, 25 April 1919.)

II

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

(Adopted at the inaugural conference of the Party, Cape Town, 30 July, 1921.)

The Communist Party of South Africa, which has been formed by the union of the former International Socialist League (S. A.), Social Democratic Federation of Capetown, Communist Party of Capetown, Jewish Socialist Society of Capetown, Jewish Socialist Society (Poalei Zion) of Johannesburg, Marxian Club of Durban, and other Socialist bodies and individuals, and which expects shortly to be affiliated to the World Communist International, makes its appeal to all South African workers, organised and unorganised, white and black, to join in promoting the *overthrow of the capitalist system and outlawry of the capitalist class*, and *the establishment of a Commonwealth of Workers* throughout the World.

What does this mean?

All recorded history is the history of class struggles and consequent evolutionary changes in the form of society; the class divisions and institutions varying from age to age according to the current economic basis, and each form being superseded by another when its mission is fulfilled. Today this is more true than ever. Under the form of society dictated by modern capitalist production, the means of life are concentrated in the hands of a small privileged class, which exploits the propertiless working masses, appropriates all the product of their labour, reduces them to the lowest and most servile level of existence that will permit them to continue working and reproducing their kind, and in addition obtains, by virtue of that economic supremacy, control of the entire State Power. This regime of contradiction between 'social production' and 'individual appropriation', of irreconcilable antagonism between masters and man, employers and employed, property owners and proletarians – the *class struggle* of today – has brought mankind into unprecedented conflict, misery and chaos – a veritable abomination of desolation and terror. But it is fast approaching a crisis entailing its *overthrow by the revolting masses in favour of a New Order*, the transition to which will be masterfully controlled by a politically victorious working class, but the eventual outcome of which will be an emancipated world, a society of economic and social equals wherein class divisions, privileges and disabilities will for the

first time in history be impossible; a system of social ownership of the means of production industrially administered by the workers on an organised and harmonious plan, ensuring from every man according to his capacity and to every man according to his needs, under the motto "All for each and each for All".

This *Social Revolution* is the essential objective of the Labour Movement, the end towards which every step it takes must directly tend. The task is no mere pastime; it is a fight, a grim, often a dangerous, sometimes a mortal fight. It is idle to deny the war between the classes, or to pretend it can somehow be composed by a drawn battle or an armistice. So elemental a conflict – which a defeat of Labour obviously only prolongs – can be solved by nothing short of the world wide destruction of the capitalist power; and it is in that direction that the world is actually evolving, for Russia is only the first country where the working class has realised in practical fashion that industry needs no exploiters, and agriculture no landlords, by *locking them out.* That pioneer victory has set the pace for the politics of the whole world today; everyone feels that others are bound to follow the Russian lead. The governments representing the bourgeois power, having *strained every nerve to strangle that young Workers' Republic,* are now all the more determined to prevent its example from spreading, and are ready to adopt every method to that end, from diplomatic chicanery, false propaganda in press, school, pulpit and platform, economic pressure and intimidation, artificial trade depression, hypocritical appeals to snobbery, patriotism, religious prejudice and racial fear or pride, to the brute force of the *Mailed Fist and the Iron Heel* wherever they dare. Lately they have instituted a determined campaign all over the world to reduce wages. They are *criminally conspiring* to maintain as long as they can their decadent, outworn, slave-grinding system with its political expression, the so-called democratic state, notwithstanding that, as a glance at any day's newspaper will show, it has not only failed to fulfil a single one of the promises still held out for it, but, by crushing the workers with the perpetual dread or actuality of unemployment, starvation, repression, massacre and war, it is driving mankind ever deeper into the abyss.

It is time for the Labour Movement in South Africa too to hearken to the call of the times to discard its futile reformism, its misleader's careerism, its petty middle class opportunism, its subservient snobbery and cowardice, of the past – all typical of the 'social patriotic' Second International which failed the workers so miserably at the outbreak of the great war, and which is even now being rehashed as the "2½ International". It is time to recognise the historic and titanic nature of the fight, and to unite all our forces in countering the enemy's palpable activity with an even more active *Red forward movement, political and industrial,* of *all* the workers; a Great Push so

militant, well organised and unified by solidarity as to deliver, in co-operation with the advanced Labour Movement of the rest of the world, the knockout blow to a hated class and system. To this standard the United Communist Party of S. A. bids *all class conscious workers* rally, whether previously adherents of any other party or not.

For the immediate future, indeed, the main duty of the party and of every member of it is to establish the widest and closest possible contact with workers of *all ranks and races* and to propagate the Communist gospel among them, in the first instance among the industrial masses, who must provide the "storm troops" of the Revolution, and secondly among the rural toilers. Even that path will not be smooth. Immediate repression in the form of raids, prosecutions, mob attacks and bloodshed by "Black (and Tan) Hundreds" or "*White Guards*" may be looked for as the propaganda is seen to be working among the submissive *helot races whose enlightenment and organisation the ruling class dreads above all.* The Communists will therefore proceed neither timorously nor tactlessly, losing no opportunity of demonstrating that, inasmuch as the cheap docile labour is what attracts the world capitalist investor to South Africa, so its understanding of and conscious entry into the working class movement is the most deadly blow South Africa can deal to world capitalism.

But propaganda "is not enough" in these days of rapid change and action, and the party will be alert to turn to the advantage of the Labour Movement wherever possible any phase of discontent or disaffection, any opposition to imperialism, any indignation at the accepted 'skiet skiet' native policy, any genuine revolt of the masses against tyranny; striving always to hasten, sharpen and shorten the inevitable conflict, to guide and inspire the struggling workers in times of stress and trial like the present, and generally to act as the revolutionary vanguard of the Labour army of South Africa.

In any sacrifices it may be called upon to undergo the party will derive great strength and inspiration from its connection with the *World Communist International*, at present headed by the Russian Communist Party, with which is also closely identified the Red Trade Union International; besides which circumstances will bring it from time to time into specially close touch with the movement in Britain, where the struggle of the miners has recently disclosed unexampled heroism and endurance. Heartened by this sense of solidarity and support, and by the exhilarating comradeship known only to fellow workers in a militant movement, we advance to do battle with the capitalist Goliath, confident that if we play our part unfalteringly we shall in our lifetime see the robber and butcher class brought low and the *workers' 'Soviets' in power.* We hold aloft the glistening banner of the World Commune to be, when the class war shall have been for ever stamped out, when mankind shall no longer cower

under the bludgeon of the oppressor, when the necessaries and amenities of life, the comfort and the culture, the honour and the power, shall be to him who toils not him who exploits, when none shall be called master and none servant, but all shall be fellow workers in common.

Down with the Capitalist System!
Up with the Workers' Commune!
Speed the Social Revolution!

III

THE 1922 STRIKE

(Under the heading 'The Fight to a Finish' the C. P. S. A. issued the following 'Manifesto' to the striking workers of the Witwatersrand on 30 January, 1922.)

Fellow Workers,

An over-confident stroke on the part of the Chamber of Mines, aimed too palpably at lowering wages and reducing the number of white workers, has had the effect of bringing home to South Africa what is really involved in capitalist exploitation, so much so that a violent revulsion of feeling against the ruling class is arising not only among ourselves (with some of the petty middle-class dependent on their custom) but also among the country folk, from whom a majority of those workers are sprung, and who although themselves often far from proletarian in position and outlook, rebel against the enslavement of their country to the mining houses, largely overseas organisations and closely linked with the British Empire.

Of such situations the Communists, since the days of Marx, have always urged organised labour to take full advantage with a view to shaking the position of the ruling class and so facilitating a change in the existing order of society. Hence without necessarily identifying itself with every slogan heard in the strike, the Communist Party of S. A. gladly offers its assistance to the Strike Committee convinced that essentially this is a fight against the rule of the capitalistic class, a fight which, if energetically pushed, may drive at least one more nail into its coffin and contribute to its eventual downfall – the only real 'settlement'. To maintain the 'white standard' to build a 'white South Africa', is impossible under capitalism, whose nature is to degrade every class it employs.

Then away with it! How? By dint of the utmost solidarity of labour against the common enemy: nothing less can win. Let us take what other help is offered, but remember that the support of landowners, interested as they themselves are in cheap labour, will not last forever, while the middle class, prone as they are to face both ways may prove broken reeds. Our only permanent allies are our fellow workers – irrespective of race or colour – as this strike is plainly teaching. And the more militant the struggle, the greater is the circle of workers drawn in, and simultaneously the more

revolutionary becomes the aim, until it is realised by all that every road must lead to one goal: the end of the capitalist system of profit and the establishment of the Workers' Republic of the World for the common and equal benefit of all workers.

(The International No. 321 Vol. VI. 3 February, 1922.)

IV

TEN CROWDED YEARS OF GLORIOUS LIFE

By S. P. Bunting

(On the death of David Ivon Jones.)

So David Ivon Jones has gone to 'his locker' at last, a 'Crimean hero', yes veteran, for though 'dead ere his prime' from the scourge that 'slit the thin-spun life', his last and best years, even to the end in far-away Yalta, were one concentrated fight for the cause of the working class and particularly the workers of South Africa. Travelled as he had over three continents in search of health, South Africa became to him far more of a home than even his native Wales, and to the last his thoughts and aspirations and suggestions converged on the land where the greatest work of his life had been done.

From the office of the Transvaal Miners' Association where he had been book-keeper, Jones was stimulated into political life by the tragic 'collapse of the Second International' as it took shape in this country. It was the War, and the vacillation and final surrender of the bulk of organised labour taking service in the cause of its own and only oppressors, that brought home to him as to many others of us the reality of the Labour movement as contrasted with the Social-Democratic counterfeit that swept the majority by the million off their feet and into the imperialist slaughter-pit – a massacre infinitely more serious and outrageous and involving its abettors in infinitely greater blood-guilt than any mere affairs of July 1913 or even March 1922.

Quickly passing the stage of reformism (or was it rather a desperate clinging to unity?) which kept him from joining the War on War action, and assimilating with astonishing rapidity the point of Marxism as well as its immediate daily application, Comrade Ivon, then Secretary of the Labour Party, had already by the time of Creswell's notorious 'See-it-through' Conference made up his mind on the proper duty of a working class party in the war crisis. Knowing little then of the preparatory work done by Lenin and his associates at the Stuttgart and other conferences of the Socialist International of those days, he grasped at once the necessity for the class-conscious workers not only to oppose and try to stop the War, which could be carried on only so long as workers willed it, but to do their utmost to give this opposition in every land the revolutionary turn which in Lenin's

own country at least resulted in so brilliant a victory for all time over the capital power.

As secretary of the International Socialist League and Editor of *The International* from August 1915, on and off, until he left us for Europe in May 1920, Ivon was the heart and soul of our activities and propaganda, amazing us all by his vitality, courage and power when all the while his frail body was fighting a rearguard action with death. Who could help acknowledging and saluting both his faith and energy and his penetrating vision into the future of the movement, even when it was being spat upon and mobbed by the infatuated workers themselves? Who could fail to recognise the flashes of real genius in his buoyant, spirited and often poetic writing? And from the time when the 'Red Light in Russia' first broke through a world of gloom, it was Jones in this country who first seized the full import and was least bewildered by the staggering events of 1917. At once he caught the scope of the Revolution which had been brewing in the councils of the Zimmerwaldians (with whom he had been maintaining contact) and when the Bolsheviks came to power he had already helped us to realise that this was no miracle but a great milestone on the march to human freedom in which the workers of South Africa, too, had been and were taking part. He it was, accordingly, who at our I. S. L. Conference next after that event carried through a motion to apply for affiliation to the new-formed Communist International. While some of us thought it only a pious if not premature gesture in favour of the unknown, to him it was a very solid and realist accession of strength and outlook, if not to the International, at any rate to the I. S. L.

In those days of impatience and agitation, Jones who since 1915 had well understood and emphasised on every occasion the part the native worker was to play in the South African revolution, carried his understanding into deeds, being prosecuted in 1918-1919 for handing out his leaflet The Bolsheviks are Coming' to natives in Maritzburg – but eventually acquitted on appeal, as he had also been acquitted on appeal in 1915 for his famous satire on the outbreak of war anniversary 'Let Saints on Earth in Concert Sing'. His report to the Second C. I. Congress, 'Communism in South Africa' deals fully, if still somewhat prophetically, with this most difficult but ultimately perhaps most important of our tasks, and right up to his last letter from Russia he had very near to his heart the cause both of 'getting the black workers' and, as equally essential, of inducing recognition of and co-operation with them on the part of the white workers' organisations, to the advancement of both black and white and the strengthening of the whole international proletarian movement.

His last activity among us was the organisation of the most successful May Day celebrations of 1920 – a change from those of 1917 which were broken up by Labour leaders, at whose incitement

the crowds threatened Jones's life in the darkness of the Town Hall steps. But, though increasing ill-health drove him from our midst, his activities continued in the Comintern and gained for him an international reputation as one of the most brilliant of Communist publicists and one very highly thought of by the foremost of the Comintern leaders.

Without offence, it may be said that his departure meant to us a loss of generous enthusiasm and inspiration which we perhaps have never quite made good since. However to all of us who knew him and worked with him, his memory will itself serve as an abiding inspiration to put forward our best, better efforts than ever before, to bring about the victory in the hope and sight of which he lived and died.

S. P. BUNTING
(The International, 6 July 1924.)

V

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION

(1928 Resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International)

South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type. The development of relations of capitalist production has led to British imperialism carrying out the economic exploitation of the country with the participation of the white bourgeoisie of South Africa (British and Boer). Of course, this does not alter the general colonial character of the economy of South Africa, since British capital continues to occupy the principal economic positions in the country (banks, mining and industry), and since the South African bourgeoisie is equally interested in the merciless exploitation of the negro population.

In the recent period in South Africa we have witnessed the growth of the manufacturing iron and steel industries, the development of commercial crops (cotton, sugar, cane), and the growth of capitalist relations in agriculture, chiefly in cattle-raising. On the basis of this growth of capitalism there is a growing tendency to expropriate the land from the negroes and from a certain section of the white farming population. The South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring also by legislative means to create a cheap market of labour power and a reserve army.

The overwhelming majority of the population is made up of negroes and coloured people (about 5,500,000 negroes and coloured people and about 1,500,000 white people according to the 1921 census). A characteristic feature of the colonial type of the country is the almost complete landlessness of the negro population: the negroes hold only one-eighth of the land whilst seven-eighths have been expropriated by the white population. There is no negro bourgeoisie as a class, apart from individual negroes engaged in trading and a thin strata of negro intellectuals who do not play any essential role in the economic and political life of the country. The negroes constitute also the majority of the working class: among the workers employed in industry and transport, 420,000 are black and coloured people and 145,000 white; among agricultural labourers 435,000 are black and 50,000 are white. The characteristic feature of the proletarianisation of the native population is the fact that the number of black workers grows faster than the number of white workers. Another characteristic fact is the great difference in the wages and material conditions of

the white and black proletariat in general. Notwithstanding a certain reduction in the living standard of the white workers which has lately taken place, the great disproportion between the wages of the white and black proletariat continues to exist as the characteristic feature of the colonial type of the country.

The Political Situation

The political situation reflects the economic structure – the semi-colonial character of the country and the profound social contradictions between the black and white population. The native population (except in the Cape province) of the country have no electoral rights, the power of the State has been monopolised by the white bourgeoisie, which has at its disposal the armed white forces. The white bourgeoisie, chiefly the Boers defeated by the arms of British imperialism at the close of the last century, had for a long time carried on a dispute with British capital. But as the process of capitalist development goes on in the country, the interests of the South African bourgeoisie are becoming more and more blended with the interests of British financial and industrial capital, and the white South African bourgeoisie is becoming more and more inclined to compromise with British imperialism, forming with the latter a united white front for the exploitation of the native population.

The Nationalist Party, which represents the interests of the big farmers and landowners and a section of white (mainly Boer) bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, is winding up its struggle for separation from the Empire and is surrendering before British capitalism (the formula proposed by the leader of this Party, General Herzog, and carried at the British Imperial Conference). Furthermore, this party is already coming out as the open advocate of the colonial expansion of British capital, carrying on an agitation for the extension of the territory of the Union of South Africa to the north (the annexation of Rhodesia), hoping in this manner to secure a vast fund of cheap native labour power.

Simultaneously with the importation of British capital and British goods, there are imported to South Africa the methods of corrupting the working class. The Labour Party of South Africa, representing the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and of the skilled labour aristocracy, openly carries on an imperialist policy, demoralising the white workers by imbuing them with a white racial ideology. Nevertheless, the influence of this party is being undermined by the steady worsening of the material conditions of the mass of the white workers. At the same time the South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring to attract to its side certain elements of the non-European population, for instance, the "coloured" population, promising them electoral rights, and also the native leaders, turning them into their agents for the

exploitation of the negro population. This policy of corruption has already brought about the fact that the leaders of the negro trade union organisations – the Industrial and Commercial Union – having expelled the Communists from the union, are now endeavouring to guide the negro trade union movement into the channel of reformism. The inception of negro reformism, as a result of the corruptionist policy of the white bourgeoisie, a reformism which acts in close alliance with the Amsterdam International, constitutes a characteristic fact of the present political situation.

The united front of the British and South African white bourgeoisie against the toiling negro population, backed by the white and negro reformists, creates for the Communist Party in South Africa an exceptionally complicated but favourable position of being the only political Party in the country which unites the white and black proletariat and the landless black peasantry for the struggle against British imperialism, against the white bourgeoisie and the white and black reformist leaders.

The Communist Party and its Tasks

The Executive Committee of the Communist International recognises the successes which the Communist Party of South Africa has recently achieved. This is seen in the growth of the Communist Party, which is now predominantly native in composition. The Communist Party has a membership of about 1,750 of whom 1,600 are natives or coloured. The Communist Party also spread into the country districts of the Transvaal. The Party has waged a fight against the reactionary Native Administration Act. The ECCI also notes the growth of native trade unions under the leadership of the CP, the successful carrying through of a number of strikes and efforts to carry through the amalgamation of the black and white unions.

The present intensified campaigns of the Government against the natives offer the CP an immense field to develop its influence among the workers and peasants, and it is among this section of the South African population that the chief field of activity of the Communist Party must continue to lie in the near future.

(a) The first task of the Party is to reorganise itself on the shop and street nuclei basis and to put forward a programme of action as a necessary condition for the building up of a mass Communist Party in South Africa.

(b) The Party must orientate itself chiefly upon the native toiling masses while continuing to work actively among the white workers. The Party leadership must be developed in the same sense. This can only be achieved by bringing the native membership without delay into much more active leadership of the Party both locally and centrally.

(c) While developing and strengthening the fight against all the customs, laws and regulations which discriminate against the native and coloured population in favour of the white population, the Communist Party of South Africa must combine the fight against all anti-native laws with the general political slogan in the fight against British domination, the slogan of an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic, with full equal rights for all races, black, coloured and white.

(d) South Africa is a black country, the majority of its population is black and so is the majority of the workers and peasants. The bulk of the South African population is the black peasantry, whose land has been expropriated by the white minority. Seven eighths of the land is owned by the whites. Hence the national question in South Africa, which is based upon the agrarian question lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa. The black peasantry constitutes the basic moving force of the revolution in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class.

(e) South Africa is dominated politically by the white exploiting class. Despite the conflict of interests between the Dutch bourgeoisie and the English imperialists, the basic characteristic of the political situation in South Africa is the developing united front between the Dutch bourgeoisie and the British imperialists against the native population. No political party in South Africa with the exception of the Communist Party advocates measures that would be of real benefit to the oppressed native population, the ruling political parties never go beyond empty and meaningless Liberal phrases. The Communist Party of South Africa is the only Party of native and white workers that fights for the complete abolition of race and national exploitation, that can head the revolutionary movement of the black masses for liberation. Consequently, if the Communist Party correctly understands its political tasks it will and must become the leader of the national agrarian revolutionary movement of the native masses.

Unfortunately the Communist Party of South Africa did not give evidence of sufficient understanding of the revolutionary importance of the mass movements of the native workers and peasants. The Communist Party of South Africa carried on a correct struggle for unity of the native and white workers in the trade union movement. But at the same time the Communist Party of South Africa found itself in stubborn opposition to the correct slogan proposed by the Comintern calling for an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full, equal rights for all races.

This opposition shows a lack of understanding of the task of our Party in South Africa relative to the revolutionary struggles of the native masses, which explains partly the still insufficient growth of the political influence of our Party upon the negro masses despite the extremely favourable conditions.

South Africa is a British dominion of a colonial type. The country was seized by violence by foreign exploiters, the land expropriated from the natives, who were met by a policy of extermination in the first stages of colonisation, and conditions of semi-slavery established for the overwhelming majority of the native masses. It is necessary to tell the native masses that in the face of the existing political and economic discrimination against the natives and ruthless oppression of them by the white oppressors, the Comintern slogan of a native republic means restriction of the land to the landless and land-poor population.

This slogan does not mean that we ignore or forget about the non-exploiting elements of the white population. On the contrary, the slogan calls for "full and equal rights for all races". The white toiling masses must realise that in South Africa they constitute national minorities, and it is their task to support and fight jointly with the native masses against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists. The argument against the slogan for a native republic on the ground that it does not protect the whites is objectively nothing else than a cover for the unwillingness to accept the correct principle that South Africa belongs to the native population. Under these conditions it is the task of the Communist Party to influence the embryonic and crystalising national movements among the natives in order to develop these movements into national agrarian revolutionary movements against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialists.

The failure to fulfil this task means separation of the Communist Party of South Africa from the native population. The Communist Party cannot confine itself to the general slogan of "Let there be no whites and no blacks". The Communist Party must understand the revolutionary importance of the national and agrarian questions. Only by a correct understanding of the importance of the national question in South Africa will the Communist Party be able to combat effectively the efforts of the bourgeoisie to divide the white and black workers by playing on race chauvinism, and to transform the embryonic nationalist movement into a revolutionary struggle against the white bourgeois and foreign imperialists. In its propaganda among the native masses the Communist Party of South Africa must emphasise the class differences between the white capitalists and the white workers, the latter also being exploited by the bourgeoisie as wage slaves, although better paid as compared with the natives. The Communist Party must continue to struggle for unity between black and white workers and not confine itself merely to the advocacy of "co-operation" between the blacks and whites in general. The Communist Party must introduce a correct class content into the idea of co-operation between the blacks and whites. It must explain to the native masses that the black and white workers are not only allies, but are the leaders of the revolutionary struggle of the native masses against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialism. A correct formulation of

this task and intensive propagation of the chief slogan of a native republic will result not in the alienation of the white workers from the Communist Party, not in segregation of the natives, but, on the contrary, in the building up of a solid united front of all toilers against capitalism and imperialism.

In the struggle against the domination of British imperialism in South Africa and against the white bourgeoisie under the slogans of the agrarian revolution and native republic the Communist Party of South Africa will undoubtedly meet with the most brutal attack of the bouregoisie and the imperialists. This can be no argument for not adopting the slogan of a native republic. On the contrary, the Party must wage a struggle for this slogan preparing by all possible means, first and foremost by mobilising the black and white workers, to meet the attacks of the ruling class.

The ECCI, while fully approving the Party's agitation against the native Bills put forward by the Pact Government, considers that this agitation should be further strengthened and intensified and should be coupled with agitation against all anti-native legislation.

The Party should pay particular attention to the embryonic national organisations among the natives, such as the African National Congress. The Party, while retaining its full independence, should participate in these organisations, should seek to broaden and extend their activity. Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist. Party in this organisation. The Party should seek to weaken the influence of the native chiefs corrupted by the white bourgeoisie over the existing native tribal organisations by developing peasants' organisations and spreading among them the influence of the Communist Party. The development of a national-revolutionary movement of the toilers of South Africa against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialism, constitutes one of the major tasks of the Communist Party of South Africa.

The Party should immediately work out an agrarian programme applicable to the native agrarian situation. The ECCI considers that the Party was correct in launching at its last Congress the slogan of "Expropriate the big estates and give them to the landless whites and natives". But this can only be treated as a general slogan. It is necessary to work out concrete partial demands which indicate that the basic question in the agrarian situation in South Africa is the land hunger of the blacks and that their interest is of prior importance in the solution of the agrarian question. Efforts should be made immediately to develop plans to organise the native peasants into peasant unions and the native agricultural workers into trade unions, while attention to the poor agrarian whites must in no way be minimised.

In the field of trade union work the Party must consider that its main task consists in the organisation of the native workers into trade unions as well as propaganda and work for the setting up of a South African trade union centre embracing black and white workers. The principle that the Party's main orientation must be on the native population applies equally to the sphere of trade union work. The Party should energetically combat the splitting policy of the Industrial and Commercial Union leaders under the slogan of unity of the whole trade union movement of South Africa. Further, the Party should work out a detailed programme of immediate demands for the native workers. The Communists must participate actively in the trade union organisation of the native workers, pursuing the policy of building up a strong left-wing within these organisations under Communist leadership.

The Party should continue its exposure of the South African Labour Party as primarily an agent of imperialism in the Labour movement.

While concentrating its chief attention on organising the native workers in the trade unions the Communist Party should not neglect the work in the white trade unions. Its tasks are the organisation of the unorganised work in the existing trade unions, to intensify the propaganda for reorganisation of the trade union movement on an industrial basis, increased agitation for affiliation of all trade unions to the Trade Union Congress. In all trade union organisations the Party must strive to build up a strong left-wing under Communist leadership.

The Party must energetically combat the influence of the Amsterdam International in the black and white trade union movement, intensifying the propaganda for world trade union unity along the lines of the Profintern (RILU) policy.

In connection with the danger of world war, the present imperialist intervention in China and the threatening war against the USSR the Party must fight by all means against the help given to the military policy of Great Britain which found its expression in the tacit support of the break of the British imperialists with the USSR. The Party should not neglect anti-militarist work.

The ECCI repeats its previous proposal to launch a special paper in the chief native languages as soon as technical difficulties have been overcome. Such a step is of great political importance.

(The Communist International
Vol VI, No. 2, 15 December 1928.)

VI

AGAINST SECTARIANISM

(M. M. Kotane: Letter to the Central Committee)
Cradock, 23 February 1934

The Party is too 'Europeanised' . . . We are simply theoretical and our theory is less connected with practice. Our Party members (especially the Whites) are ideologically not South Africans; they are foreigners who know nothing about and are not interested in the country in which they are living at present. They are 'revolutionists' and 'Bolsheviks'. Their hobbies are the German situation and the Comintern, Stalin and Trotsky and the errors of various Communist Parties.

But such a conception is just the opposite of Bolshevism. We are living in Africa. The oppressed and exploited people of Africa are without the 150 years of organisational tradition gained by the European working class. The 'European' (the term is used in its correct sense – not for 'white') language is not blindly applicable to South Africa.

The independent Native republic . . . has different premises, language and attitudes to that of the proletarian dictatorship and the socialist revolution; and it is precisely here where the crux of our argument necessarily revolves.

The identification of the two historical stages is nothing but rank opportunism, a misconception of our present task.

We must learn from our European brothers, but we should not lose sight of the fact that Europe differs historically, politically and economically from South Africa.

The Party must become more Africanised, pay special attention to South Africa, study the conditions in this country and concretise the demands of the toiling masses from first hand experience. We must speak the language of the native masses and must know their demands.

Thus while it must not lose its international allegiance, the Party must be 'Bolshevised' – become South African not only theoretically but in reality.

VII

ARM THE PEOPLE

(Wartime pamphlet (1943) issued by the CPSA (Johannesburg).)

All the ten million people of South Africa are vitally concerned with the outcome of the war which today has spread over the whole world. The aim of the Fascist alliance of Germany, Japan and Italy is to conquer and enslave the world. The Fascists are the sworn enemies of human freedom and the people's rights. They wish to destroy the Socialist Soviet Union, which for 23 years has stood as a beacon-light of hope and inspiration to the workers and oppressed peoples of the world – a living symbol of the ability of the common people to build freedom and a better life for themselves. Just as the Fascists, representing the brutal finance-capitalists of Germany, Italy and Japan have enslaved, terrorised and degraded the workers of their own countries, so they aim to oppress the peoples of the whole world, to suppress their organisations, and to smash down their struggles and aspirations for Freedom and Socialism.

The People's Alliance, led by the Soviet Union, Britain, China and the USA includes all the forces that stand on the side of freedom. In the thick of the battle in Europe stands the Soviet Union, the country that has fearlessly stood for freedom ever since the great Socialist revolution that liberated its own people, whose leaders oppose to the savage racial doctrines of the Fascists the great principles of internationalism, of human unity and the brotherhood of all workers. In the Far East the great Chinese people have shown the whole world how an armed and free Non-European race can fight Fascism. And in America and Britain, in spite of imperialist and capitalist domination, the workers and progressive forces are steadily assuming leadership as the most uncompromising and consistent fighters against the Fascists.

These factors, together with the increasing strength and awareness of the workers' and peoples' movements in all countries, are the signs that an allied victory will be a people's victory, that the crushing of Nazism and Fascism will lead to the advance of the people towards freedom and Socialism all over the world.

Today the development of the war has brought the Fascist danger closer than ever to our own shores.

This little pamphlet is to show the concrete, practical measures that must be taken here and now to protect the people and to mobilise South Africa to the full in the world-wide front for Freedom.

The Threat to South Africa

Japan, Hitler's Fascist ally, has struck treacherously in the Far East. In Malaya, Singapore and Java, the Imperialist governments failed to prepare, to arm and free the people. Today, it is the people who suffer under the cruel blows of Japanese Fascism.

What about South Africa? The Mediterranean is closed to British and Allied shipping. Supplies to the East must go through Union Ports – Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban.

Look at Madagascar. It is controlled by the Vichy government – the men who handed over France to Hitler. They handed over Indo-China to Japan. They handed over Dakar to Hitler. They will not hesitate to allow the enemy to use Madagascar as a jumping-off ground to invade South Africa.

Our country is in danger. The war is coming closer, bringing with it a threat to the whole people of South Africa, of all races and colours. All of us, men, women and children, face the horrors of modern warfare as practised by the Fascist barbarians of Germany, Italy and Japan.

In the Nazi-occupied territories of Europe, in China, Java, Malaya, wherever the Fascists have gone, they have behaved with the most terrible cruelty and barbarity. They destroy by bombing and burning, the people's homes and cities. They murder and rape, they rob and enslave the people. Everywhere the Fascists have gone they have been like a swarm of locusts, stripping the countries they have occupied of wealth, leaving behind them death, ruin and starvation.

The Nazis and their allies, Italy and Japan, are out to conquer and enslave the world. They are out to crush the people's rights and the people's fight for freedom everywhere. They want to smash the workers' unions and political parties – to close the door to Democracy, Socialism and national independence for all the peoples of the world.

The Lessons of the War

Although the greatest powers in the world, Britain, America, the Soviet Union and China, supported by the freedom-loving people of all countries, have united to destroy the Fascist danger to humanity the tremendous forces of wealth and manpower which they represent have not been brought into full use. The Fascists have been checked in the Soviet Union, in China and by Chinese troops in Burma. But we must learn from the failures of the Allies elsewhere, the weaknesses which led to the Nazi conquest of Europe and to the successes of Japan in the Far East.

The Soviet Union has shown that a free people can stop Fascism. After conquering the whole of Europe, the Nazis had great initial advantages in their attack upon the Soviet Union. They had the whole of the war industry of Europe, the steel, iron, coal and food production, and the electricity supplies of the Continent working for them. General Smuts has said:

> *"No one would have dreamt that the Russian Army and the Russian people would have made such a glorious 'come-back' after their great losses and untold suffering. After losing millions of men, a great mass of war material and the richest part of their country, they have made a grand recovery. It all reads like a miracle."*

But it was no miracle. It was the courage, the unity and determination of a free and enlightened Socialist people which checked the Nazi hordes in Russia and today, gradually in the face of bitter and desperate resistance, is driving them out of the Soviet Union.

China is a nation of 400,000,000 people. They lacked heavy industry and a modern disciplined army. Yet for four and a half years, General Chiang Kai-Shek, supported by all political parties including the great Chinese Communist Party, has succeeded in uniting the Chinese people in a magnificent resistance and is holding at bay the highly motorised and mechanised forces of Imperialist Japan.

It is only if all the Allied nations, setting aside class and imperialist interests which hamper their war efforts, learn from the lessons of China and the Soviet Union, mobilise their own resources and people, and arm, liberate and arouse the people in the Colonial countries for an all-in war against Fascism, that the Axis menace to the world will be speedily destroyed and the peoples everywhere will advance towards democracy, independence and a better life.

Defend South Africa

Today with the Fascist peril approaching ever closer to our shores, is the time for all South Africans, whatever their class, their colour or their race, to come together in a fighting unity for the defence of our country and the destruction of Fascism. But let there be no mistake. The only way to secure South Africa against invasion and to mobilise the full resources and manpower of our country is to follow out a positive programme of realistic measures to equip South Africa for this "all-in" war. There can be no compromise. There can be no half-measures in fighting Fascism.

Unfortunately our Government is following just such a policy of compromises and half-measures. General Smuts said on March 11, 1942:

"Before the Japanese take this country I will see to it that every Coloured man and every Native who can be armed will be armed."

But no move is made. If the people are to be armed, full training must commence immediately. The idea of waiting until the enemy is already upon us is obvious folly. The people must be given full training in the use of arms, not tomorrow when it may be too late, but today!

Vested interests, colour prejudice, fear, ignorance and apathy, even amongst those who support the war, obstruct the war effort. Government spokesmen are continually decrying the "apathy" of the people. But it is the Government itself which, by its lackadaisical policy, is encouraging this apathy. The Government, for the sake of the great mining interests, sidetracks enormous productive resources and the labour power of 400,000 men for the production of a commodity like gold, which is practically valueless in the present war emergency. Open Nazi organisations are allowed unrestrained to continue their fifth column activities. On all sides the people see the rich class sabotaging production, profiteering, maintaining their useless lives in luxury and corruption, while the poor are called upon to make increasing sacrifices for the war. This policy causes the apathy. While the Government permits these things, it can never awaken the people to the seriousness of the war situation and arouse them for victory.

Passes Must Go

In the Senate, Col. Reitz, Union Minister for Native Affairs, drew attention to some of the suffering and misery caused by the Pass Laws. He said that:

there was nothing which created so much bad feeling and disturbed race relations so much as the Pass Laws . . . During 1939-41 there were 297,695 arrests in the Transvaal . . . it is safe to assume that five times that number (i.e. 1,500,000 men!) were stopped by police. He proposed to take the matter up and see whether the public could not be convinced that the present state of affairs was wholly unjust and illogical.

The overwhelming majority of the public (i.e. the Africans who are daily arrested, humiliated and insulted by the police) is deeply convinced of the injustice of Pass Laws. If this wretched law were abolished at once there would be few to mourn it, millions who would rejoice.

Here again we dare not ignore the lessons that can be learnt from the tragic fate of other countries. A people oppressed, humiliated and demoralised cannot throw their full vigour into the fight. A country torn and divided by internal dissension cannot resist total Fascist

aggression. The time to end pass laws and all other laws which oppress and divide South Africans, is now!

The eight million Non-European people of South Africa must be liberated. They must share fully the rights of all citizens if South Africa is to be united for defence and victory.

A Policy for Victory

The Communist Party, the most determined and uncompromising fighter against Fascism, and for the people's rights, calls upon all South Africans to combine their forces now and to strengthen the Government for the carrying out of the following policy as the only realistic basis for the defence of our country, our lives and our homes and for the advancement of all peoples of South Africa towards freedom and unity:

1 THE PEOPLE MUST BE ARMED. European and Non-European alike are menaced by the invader. The Africans, and other Non-European soldiers, have already proved in the field that they are magnificent soldiers. African troops from British, French and Belgian colonies in the North have borne arms against the enemy with great distinction. Today, when South Africa is faced with a desperate struggle for its existence, there can be no further hesitation. Non-European soldiers must be armed at once, trained fully in every branch of modern warfare, and enlisted on an equal basis with Europeans.

2 WE MUST HAVE A MASS ARMY. The wretched pay, family allowances and pensions debar thousands from joining up. The pay and conditions of all soldiers must be improved, and the Governor-General's Fund, which makes our fighting men dependent on charity, should be abolished and replaced by adequate State provision, through taxation of the rich.

3 ALL-OUT PRODUCTION FOR VICTORY. War industry and other essential production must be organised on an all-in war basis, irrespective of profits and vested interests. The cost plus 10% system of payment for war contracts, which leads to endless sabotage, inefficiency and corruption, must be done away with. Workers production committees must be set up in all factories and workshops, to increase output, safeguard the workers' interests and prevent sabotage. Inessential production must stop. New industries and untapped resources must be developed to the full.

4 DECENT WAGES AND CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS. Poor living standards only help to swell the capitalists' profits, while they undermine the health, the morale and efficiency of the workers. Colour-bar and craft barriers prevent the best utilisation of manpower

in skilled jobs. The only guarantee of the workers' rights and of workers' vigilance to secure fuller production is 100% Trade Unionism and the recognition of African Trade Unions.

5 A FREE PEOPLE TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM. To arouse the full enthusiasm and determination of the mass of South African people for victory, oppressive and discriminatory laws and measures which restrain the Non-European people must be abolished. The Pass Law, with its accompanying police persecution, must go. The Liquor laws must be amended so as to release the Africans from the endless round of police raids and terrorism. There should be no right of search or of entry into private houses without a warrant. General Smuts has said that the policy of segregation is doomed. We must see the immediate application of this "end segregation" policy, by the abolition of all legislation and regulations preventing trading or the acquiring of property or land to any section of the people. Immediate measures of democracy, security and civil liberties must be extended towards the Non-Europeans.

6 ADEQUATE SOCIAL SERVICES. The strength of a people depends upon the way it is housed, cared for and educated. South Africa must have a population of skilled and trained soldiers, workers and farmers, able to handle complicated machines of war and production, people able to develop themselves and their country.

7 PROTECTION FROM AIR RAIDS. We have read of the agonies suffered by the people of other countries when enemy planes flew over their cities, dropping death and destruction from the skies. And now, when the danger is coming ever closer to our homes, no effort or expense must be spared to protect our homes and our people.

8 SAFEGUARD THE PEOPLE'S FOOD. Large numbers of South Africans do not get enough food. The rich hoard supplies, and the poor, especially in the countryside, are faced with starvation. Invasion threatens an acute famine, in addition to the existing shortage. "Control" boards, which have been set up for mealies, fruit, etc., are used in the interests of rich farmers. Production is kept down and prices rise. Quantities of food are deliberately destroyed. Food supplies must be checked, guarded and fairly rationed. Food production must be increased by agricultural planning and control, the utilisation of unused land and the granting of land to landless people in the countryside. Small farmers, European and African, must be assisted by provision of modern agricultural machinery and fertilisers free of charge, general education and agricultural education for small farmers must be thoroughly carried out, and the native agricultural labourer, the poorest section of the population, must be given a minimum wage cost of living allowance and the right to organise trade unions.

Only by means of such a policy can the full energies and resources of the 10,000,000 people of South Africa be mobilised. This is the way to victory and to the successful defence of our shores. It is the only way.

Such a policy would be the means of uniting and advancing our whole population not only for the winning of the war but as a basis for the future happiness and prosperity of our country. Only the direct and indirect enemies of the South African people will stand in the way of its realisation.

The Fifth Column

It is the weakness of the Government, more than any other factor, which bolsters up the influence of Fascist sympathisers and fifth columnists in South Africa. When General Smuts promised to arm the Non-European people, Dr Malan issued a "Black Manifesto" in which a violent attack was made upon the Non-European people. Supported by the Ossewa Brandwag, the Pirow-ites and the Hertzog-ites, these wretched supporters of Hitler have launched the most desperate and vicious racial campaign to stir up hatred between Europeans and Non-Europeans and to prevent the arming of the South African masses for the defence of their country.

The reason for this is clear. It is in line with the policy pursued by Quislings of all countries – the policy of surrender to Fascism abroad; the destruction of people's rights and the introduction of Fascism at home.

The Nazi New Order

These men have always been the most extreme opponents of freedom for the workers and the Non-Europeans. That is why they sympathise with Hitler, that is why they seek to betray the people of South Africa, to German and Japanese imperialism, to play the role of Quisling, Petain and Franco. What their policy means was clearly expressed in Parliament by the Rev. Naude, a supporter of the Nazi Pirow group. Speaking about Non-European children who, usually through poverty and ignorance, have broken the law, he said:

> *"The best way to drive the devil from Non-European juvenile delinquents is to give them a taste of the sjambok . . . These delinquents should be handed over to the farmers who would help to save their souls by making them work from sunrise to sundown."*

This is the voice of Fascism in South Africa. This is the fate which the Fascists have in store for the mass of our people. European and Non-European alike.

These Fascist elements within South Africa must be rooted out before they can play the shameful part of their fellow-traitors overseas. Their organisations must be dissolved, their press silenced, their leaders arrested.

Forward to Freedom

The fate of the peoples of all countries depends upon the outcome of this world war. Victory for the People's Alliance led by China, America, the Soviet Union and Britain will destroy the evil Fascist forces which threaten to drag the world back to the Dark Ages. Victory will open up new perspectives for the working people of all countries, of liberty, independence and the advance towards a new, Socialist society.

South Africa is a beautiful country. It is wealthy enough to provide a decent life for all its people of all races and colours. But today, because of a handful of rich capitalists, it is a land of jails, slums, poverty and oppression. Ten million South Africans have a future to build in our country, a future of justice, happiness and socialism. That is why our whole population has an interest in defending South Africa from the Fascist enslavers, in marching together with the freedom-loving peoples of all lands for the destruction of Hitlerism.

That is why the Communist Party, the Party that fights the world over for Socialism, for the rights and the advancement of all working and oppressed peoples, throws its full efforts into the struggle for victory. It calls upon the workers and all progressive and advanced people, to aid in this fight by pressing forward in a united movement of the South African people for the carrying out of a clearcut people's programme for defence and victory. We Communists pledge that we will not spare ourselves nor rest, we will set an inspiring, practical example in industry, on the home front and in the military and civil defence services.

The Communist Party needs the support of every intelligent worker to educate organise and unite the people for victory and freedom.

To be a Communist is not easy. It requires determination, courage and an unshakeable devotion to Socialism and to the working-class. But every worker who is inteiligent and class-conscious, who hates Fascism and oppression, and who believes in the strength of the common people to overcome their enemies and to build a new and a better life should take his place in the ranks of the Communist Party.

VIII

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

(Adopted at the Congress of the People, 26 June 1955, and subsequently endorsed at national conferences by the African National Congress, South African Indian Congress, Congress of Trade Unions, Coloured People's Congress and the Communist Party.)

We the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthrights without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white together – equals, countrymen and brothers – adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out here have been won.

The people shall govern!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex.

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

All National Groups shall have Equal Rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races.

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by laws against insults to their race and national pride.

The preaching and practice of national, racial or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime.

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The People shall share in the Country's Wealth

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people.

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people.

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The Land shall be shared among Those who Work it!

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided among those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger.

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers.

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land.

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose.

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All shall be Equal before the Law!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial.

No one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official.

The courts shall be representative of all the people.

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance.

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people.

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organize to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children.

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law.

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province and from South Africa abroad.

Pass Laws, permits, and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There Shall be Work and Security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers.

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits.

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work.

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers.

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers, and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work.

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life.

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands.

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace.

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children.

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit.

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan.

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens.

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There Shall Be Houses, Security and Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security.

Unused housing space to be made available to the people.

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry.

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state.

Free medical care and hospitalization shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres.

The aged, orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state.

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all.

Fenced locations and ghettoes shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall Be Peace and Friendship

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of nations.

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation – not war.

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all.

The people of the protectorates – Basutoland (Lesotho), Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Swaziland – shall be free to decide for themselves their own future.

The right of all the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

> Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:
>
> *'These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives until we have won our liberty.'*

IX

THE NEW AFRICA – CAPITALIST OR SOCIALIST?

(Editorial (October 1969) of the first issue of *The African Communist*)

Africa is in revolt. From East to West, from North to South, the peoples of this great Continent are arising to claim their birthright that has been stolen. The imperialist Powers and the White minorities are being forced to give up the land and the natural resources. Africans are uniting in powerful national liberation movements and trade unions. The imperialists are trying to prolong their rule. They send soldiers to shoot down the people. They try to bribe the people's leaders. When that does not work they arrest and deport them on framed-up charges. They invent faked 'treason' charges and 'massacre' plots. They promise half independence, or self-government on the instalment plan.

These methods cannot succeed. Africa is on the march for freedom, her people are awake, and nothing can stop them from reaching their goal: government of Africa by Africans, for Africans. The imperialist powers must quit Africa. The White minorities must accept the condition of equality and give up their ill-gotten privileges.

What shape will the new Africa take? Will it be capitalist, like Western Europe and America? Or socialist, like Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China? That is something the peoples of this Continent will have to answer for themselves. It is a big question. The future happiness and well-being of our people and our children depend upon it. It is important that we should choose wisely.

Let us look at the two systems.

Two Systems

We know capitalism in Africa. We have seen it and suffered under it.

Under capitalism, the land, the natural resources and the industries, built up by the hands of the workers, belong to private owners or companies. Each owner is producing not for the public good but for his private profit. He pays as little wages as he can and wants to take as much as possible for himself.

Take a capitalist who is making shoes in a factory. He is not worried about the people who are barefoot. He wants to make a lot of money and get rich. All the profit he makes comes out of the exploitation of

the workers, for all value comes from labour. Capitalism means the exploitation of man by man.

Socialism is different. All the means of production – the land, the mines, factories and so on – belong to the people as a whole. Production is planned. The aim is to see that everyone gets good food to eat, clothes to wear, houses to live in. The aim of production and of society is to see that people are happy and comfortable, that they are highly educated and cultured. The worker knows that no capitalist profits from his labour. The country goes ahead quickly because development is properly planned. Socialism means the abolition of exploitation.

Overcoming Backwardness

Centuries of imperialist domination and robbery have left Africa backward and undeveloped. The European powers, Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, have only been interested in taking as much wealth out of the country as quickly as possible. At one time they captured millions of our people, and deported them to Europe and America as slaves. Afterwards they enslaved Africans in their own continent, through forced labour on European-owned plantations, farms and mines, at starvation wages.

As a result of alien oppression and exploitation, Africa is the most backward part of the world. The great masses of her people live in terrible poverty, ignorance and disease. The first task of every African patriot is to liberate our Continent from alien domination, for without this there can be no progress. But to win and to keep true freedom we must also free Africa from backwardness. Her countries must be able to stand on their own feet economically, her people's living, health and cultural standards must be rapidly advanced.

Experience has proved that socialism is the most suitable method of quickly developing countries which are economically backward. Russia was formerly the most backward of the big European countries. Under Socialism she has shot forward in forty years to become the most advanced, although many of those years were taken up in wars against imperialist intervention. In the last war, the Soviet Union was the only country on the mainland of Europe which successfully withstood Hitler's brutal armies and thus saved the world from Nazi domination.

It was socialism which gave Soviet industry the strength and her people the fighting spirit to resist and conquer. The Sputniks and the man-made planet prove that Soviet science and industry today are second to none.

In ten short years, socialism and Communist leadership have transformed China from a land of terrible backwardness, illiteracy and poverty, to a land of flourishing industry and agriculture, of advanced education and progress. India and China won freedom from imperialist rule at about the same time. But India chose the capitalist road; China

the socialist road. Today China has far outstripped India in economic progress.

Different Kinds of Socialism

Some people try to tell you there are different kinds of socialism. They like socialism, they say, but not the kind they have in the Soviet Union and China. The British Labour Party says it is in favour of socialism. So does the French Socialist Party. But if one studies these parties one will find that their socialism is only in words, not in deeds. Though the Labour Party was once in the government in England, the real power was still held by the big capitalists and imperialists. Private companies still own the big banks, industries and so on. The Labour Government continued to oppress the colonial people in the British Empire in the interests of big business. The French so-called 'Socialist' Party did the same. They support the French Government on the 'dirty war' against the people of Algeria.

Others talk of a special sort of 'African' socialism. Some African leaders of independent countries also claim to be socialists, although they do not practise socialism and even suppress socialist and Communist literature and leaders.

There is only one kind of genuine Socialism in the world. That is revolutionary Marxism, Communism. The so-called 'different kinds' of socialism have been proved not to be socialism at all, but just different kinds of capitalism, wearing a socialist mask to try to bluff the workers.

Why They Hate Communism

Nothing is so much hated and feared by the imperialists and their agents as Communism and the Communists. American officials are running all over the Continent of Africa offering dollars – if only people will help them against Communism. But we notice that the people who shout so loudly against Communism are often the people who are most bitterly opposed to African freedom.

Look at the Union of South Africa. Everybody knows that the Nationalist Government of that country, with its policy of apartheid, is a savage and ruthless enemy of African progress. That is where Africans are hunted for passes, flogged and murdered, sent to forced labour on farms and mines, insulted and persecuted, simply because they are dark-skinned.

It is no accident that the first thing the Nationalist Government did, when it took power in 1948, was to outlaw Communism. They banned the Communist Party, which for thirty years had led the people in struggles for freedom and equality. Hundreds of Communists have been banned and banished, driven out of their jobs, forbidden

on pain of jail to go to meetings or take any part in political and trade union movements.

Yet, belief in Communism still lives on in South Africa. It is spreading throughout the Continent, although every day it is denounced and attacked by agents of United States, British, French, Portuguese, and Belgian imperialism.

They hate Communism because they know that the Communists are the bravest, most clear-headed and incorruptible leaders in the people's struggle against imperialism, for freedom and equality. They know that once the African workers and peasants have mastered the great ideas of Communism, nothing will stop them in their onward march to freedom, independence and socialism.

They Tell Lies

The imperialists and White supremacists pass laws to make it illegal to defend Communism. They try to shut the mouths of the Communists. They tell lies about Communism to deceive the people. They hope that, as they have silenced the Communists, there will be no one to answer their lies. But the truth is stronger than lies. Communism is today a great and victorious world-movement, embracing more than a third of the human race. You cannot shut Africans out from the outside world or prevent their learning what is going on elsewhere. Nor can you succeed in silencing the voice of Communism in Africa, for the Communists are part and parcel of the people of Africa. The African Communists will answer the lies of the imperialists.

Here are some of the lies:

(1) 'That capitalism is democratic, and Communism means dictatorship.'

Africans are not likely to be bluffed by this lie. They have seen 'Western democracy' in action for too long. They have seen it answer the demands of the Africans for real democracy and self-government with bullets, terror and mass arrests. Certainly Communism means to suppress the imperialist agents, and the institutions of backwardness and slavery which they have encouraged and tolerated. Call that dictatorship if you like. But it is a people's dictatorship, used by the workers and peasants against their enemies. For the masses it means much greater freedom and democracy than is possible in any other form of society. It means people's control of the wealth and resources of their own country. Under capitalism, even where people have the vote, the rich are always the real rulers. Those who control the wealth are the real controllers of the State.

(2) 'That Communism is out to suppress religion.'

That is not true, either. Marxism is not a religious philosophy. It believes that everything can be explained rationally, and that all religions are forms of superstition. At the same time, Communists

respect people's religious beliefs and the rights of all to propagate all religious, or anti-religious, views. Certainly, if the imperialists use religion as a cloak for oppression and the master-race cult, they must be vigorously opposed. But no genuine church or religious group has any need to fear a Communist or socialist society.

(3) 'That Communists are out to replace Western imperialism with "Soviet imperialism".'

Another straight lie. There is no such thing as 'Soviet imperialism'. There is no capitalist class in the Soviet Union to profit by exploiting colonies. Communists believe in self-determination: that all people have the right to govern themselves, in the interests of their own people. They reject all theories of 'master races' and 'inferior races', and fight to end race discrimination. The Soviet Union is giving generous aid in the development of African countries, to establish their national independence on a sound basis. Even where these countries are led by anti-Communists, like Nasser and the Emperor of Abyssinia, the Soviet Union is helping them as much as possible, without any strings or conditions. Those who talk nonsense about so-called 'Soviet imperialism' should remember that under Communist leadership and with Soviet assistance, China's 600 million people have achieved a greater measure of freedom, independence and unity than ever before in its long history.

Communists in Africa are out to win full freedom and independence for African countries.

Is Africa 'Different'?

Some people say: 'Communism may be all very well in Europe, or Asia, but Africa is different. There are no classes or class struggle in this Continent; all Africans are the same; and they have only one task – to get rid of imperialism.'

Let us answer these points one by one.

First of all, Africa is only 'different' because, as a result of imperialism, it is economically backward. As soon as industries develop, and private property in land, the people will be divided more and more into capitalists, workers and peasants.

Already there are classes and class struggles. There are rich and poor. There are Africans who own property and exploit the labour of others; and there are Africans who have nothing to sell except their labour-power. There are the workers, the proletariat, as Marx called them: the landless and propertyless

The proletariat is the most advanced class, the bravest and most clear-sighted fighters against imperialism. They have nothing to lose but their chains, and they will fight to the end against imperialism, even when the middle classes would like to compromise and accept minor concessions which will leave the masses little better off than before.

It is true that our first task in Africa is to get rid of imperialism. Communist ideas are weapons in this struggle. The policy of Communists in countries suffering from national oppression is to unite all classes in the common struggle for freedom. This struggle will be won quicker and more completely if it is led by the working class, guided by the scientific understanding of Marxism.

After imperialism has been defeated, the struggle will not be over. The countries of Africa will still be faced with the tasks of overcoming poverty, exploitation, disease and ignorance. These battles can only be won by marching towards a Communist Africa.

Karl Marx and the Science of Socialism

There were Socialists in the world before the time of the great German revolutionary, Karl Marx, who died in 1883, but these pioneers had merely seen that it would be more reasonable to organise production in a socialist way, rather than a capitalist one. To them, socialism was a beautiful dream of what the world could be like. Marx changed socialism from a dream into a science. He discovered the laws which determine change in human society.

Marx showed how society develops from lower to higher forms – tribalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism – according to the development of the productive forces at each stage.

The Marxist philosophy, dialectical materialism, enables us to understand these laws. It gives us the key to understanding the world as it really is – and how to change it.

All progress comes through conflicts and contradictions. There is a conflict between what is new and struggling to be born, and what is old and dying.

These laws can be used to transform society. The main force in modern society which is struggling for a better life is the working class.

Under the banner of Marxism the working class in one country after another is triumphing over capitalism.

The Duties of an African Communist

The imperialists are trying to keep the knowledge of Communism from the African people. But they cannot succeed. More and more working people in the Continent are striving to learn more about Marxism.

The duty of a Communist is to study Marxism and the conditions in his own country, wherever he may be, and to teach others.

In Africa Communists have also other duties, if they are not merely parlour-socialists. They have to take an active part in the struggles of their people, as oppressed people, for national liberation.

National liberation is a task for the whole nation, not just for the

working class. Therefore the Communists, everywhere in our Continent, will work to build a United Front of National Liberation, of all classes, workers, peasants, intellectuals and businessmen.

Within this United Front they will also work to see that the working class plays an independent and leading part. The workers should be organised, economically and politically. They should be organised in trade unions to get better wages and conditions. The workers also need their own political party. Starting with Marxist study classes, they should aim at building a powerful Communist Party in each region of Africa, a Party that will be an essential and vital partner in the United Front, the pride of the workers and oppressed people.

Only by building a true Communist Party will the workers of Africa be able to play their leading part in the emancipation of their great continent. A Party which is a true leading section of the proletariat and the people as a whole, which fights in the front line of every people's struggle for freedom, big and small; a Party which earns its right to leadership, not by engaging in petty quarrels for positions, but by playing a brave and worthy role in the fight for bread, land and freedom; for the overthrow of imperialism and White domination, for the advance of Africa to a glorious socialist future.

(The African Communist, No. 1
Johannesburg, October 1969.)

X

THE STORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

(Text of leaflet illegally printed and distributed in South Africa, July 1961.)

It is forty years since the Communist Party of South Africa was formed, on July 29 1961.

Never was any organisation so much hated by the bosses and rulers of this country as the Communist Party. Never was any organisation so much loved by the workers of the towns and poor people of the countryside, by the oppressed millions of Non-Whites.

The reason was not far to seek.

In every struggle of the people – against racial discrimination, poverty and oppression – the Communist Party fought in the front ranks.

The African people will never forget the Communist Party. They remember how, for many years, it led the fight against the Pass Laws. They recall the name of the great hero and martyr, Johannes Nkosi, who was brutally murdered by the police at the mass demonstration against passes at Durban on December 16, 1930. They remember that the Communist Party was the first to organise African trade unions to win higher wages, better jobs and better conditions for the working class, led by pioneer trade unionists like Gana Makabeni, Albert Nzula, Moses Kotane and J. B. Marks. Ceaselessly the Communist Party worked to arouse the people to unite, to build the African National Congress, to demand their rights for land, bread and freedom, for votes for all in a democratic South Africa based on equality of rights and opportunities for everyone.

The Indian people of this country cannot forget how under the inspiration of Dadoo and other Indian Communists, as well as non-Communists, the whole struggle of the Indian people was raised to new heights; how they fought for unity with the African and Coloured people for EQUALITY and FREEDOM for ALL.

The Coloured people know the role the Communists have played in fighting against apartheid and bad conditions. They remember the part played by pioneers like Jimmy la Guma, John Gomas and Ray Alexander in organising the poorest-paid Coloured workers.

The Communist Party was a non-racial organisation – the first in this country to admit all men and women regardless of colour, on a basis of complete equality. The White workers, who today stand aloof

or even hostile towards the aspirations of the non-white masses, should remember that it was Communists like Bill Andrews, the father of the Labour movement, Ivon Jones, S. P. Bunting and many others who pioneered and built up the trade unions and working class political movements which are responsible for the higher wages and better conditions which they enjoy today.

Sworn Enemy of Nationalism

The Communists stand for the direct opposite of everything the Nationalist Party stands for.

Instead of apartheid – unity and friendship of all South Africans, Black and White.

Instead of oppression – freedom and equality: freedom of speech, assembly, press, organisation and movement; equality of rights and opportunities.

No wonder the Nationalists hate the Communists so much!

Headed by men like 'Sjambok' Swart, the present State President, and Hitler-lovers like Verwoerd, the Nationalist Party swore it would destroy Communism in South Africa.

In 1950 they passed the 'Suppression of Communism Act', which declared the Communist Party unlawful.

They listed every member or supporter of the CPSA they knew.

They forced hundreds of Communists to resign from the Congress movement and the trade unions; banned them from attending gatherings; forced people like Sam Kahn, Brian Bunting and Ray Alexander out of Parliament where they had been elected by the votes of the people, and Fred Carneson out of the Provincial Council.

Communists were victimised out of their jobs, and like other patriots and freedom-lovers they have been exiled from their homes to far-away places or even out of the country.

By methods like these the Nats thought they could kill the spirit of Communism in South Africa But they have failed hopelessly.

The former Communist Party of South Africa was dissolved, but a new one – the South African Communist Party – has grown up in its place to carry on with the struggle and carry it on to victory.

And all South Africa knows that – shoulder-to-shoulder with non-Communist democrats and fighters for freedom – the Communists have continued to play a glorious part in every great movement of the masses against the hated Nationalist regime. In the Defiance Campaign and the Congress of the People, the movement against Passes, the bus boycotts, the Treason Trial, the Maritzburg Conference and many another stirring chapter of South African history, the Communists have played a full and exemplary part.

The Nationalist Party cannot destroy or suppress Communism.

They can persecute Communists – but they cannot kill the deep

roots of Communism in the love and respect of the people. They cannot break the firm ties of comradeship between Communists and non-Communists in the freedom fight.

You can kill people – but you cannot kill ideas, least of all noble and true ideas like those of Communism. For these ideas have been evolved by the greatest thinkers humanity has produced, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin. They embody and carry forward the thinking of all the great humanists down the ages. They arise from a deep study of philosophy, of history, of the world we live in and the working of the capitalist system.

History has proved Communism to be true and correct. In a short period of time, enormous strides forward to a better and freer life have been made under Communist leadership by formerly backward countries like Russia and China. Hitler's monstrous armies were crushed primarily by the Soviet Union. And it is the socialist science of the Soviet Union which has led to the conquest of Space by man.

Despite all the lies of the capitalist newspapers, these and many other facts prove to all that Communism holds the answers to the problems of humanity; the key to a better and brighter future for all who live on this earth; the key to peace, national freedom, democracy and socialism.

Where the Communist Party Stands Today

Where does the Communist Party stand today on the great problems which face our country – in the serious position to which we have been brought under the crazy Verwoerd government with its sick ideas of apartheid and White supremacy?

We stand where Communists have always stood on the great question of the ending of capitalism and the exploitation of man by man. We believe that the best road for the future of our country is that of SOCIALISM. That is, a society where all the industries, farms, mines and other means of production are made public property; where living standards rise rapidly and progress is planned by a strong workers' and peasants' government.

Capitalism is doomed. The United States of America and other imperialist countries stagger from one crisis of unemployment to another. The only future capitalism can offer is another world war fought with atomic weapons that can wipe out millions of people and destroy man's finest achievements. Already one third of the human race has turned its back on capitalism – with its poverty, inequality, racialism, wars and exploitation – and is advancing victoriously to build Communism – the society of the future.

On the immediate problem of South Africa, we stand with all other patriots and democrats, irrespective of their views about socialism. We stand for a united front of national liberation. We stand

together with the Congress movement for the Freedom Charter. We stand for the overthrow of the Nazi Nationalist government and the summoning of a democratically-elected, sovereign National Convention to promulgate a new Constitution for South Africa.

We stand for higher wages, free speech and the ending of the Nazi laws which have driven the Communist Party and the African National Congress underground.

How to Fight

The African Revolution which is sweeping through our Continent has won one victory after another until independence has been won everywhere except in a few pockets of imperialism such as the Portuguese colonies and the vicious White Colonialism practised in this country and the Rhodesias. The people will win here too.

But people do not get freedom served up on a plate. They have to fight for it. Sometimes they even have to fight with arms in their hands, as is now being done by the brave patriots of Algeria and Angola.

The key is ORGANISATION. We shall not beat the brutal Verwoerd dictatorship unless we are united in our own ranks.

Workers! Join your trade unions. Peasants, organise against the traitor chiefs who sell out to Bantu Authorities. Build up, everyone, your underground African National Congress and other organisations which fight for freedom. Support your South African Communist Party, the voice of oppressed and exploited South Africa!

THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

XI

THE ROAD TO SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM

(The Programme of the South African Communist Party was adopted at the fifth national conference, held inside the country in 1962. The document consists of seven sections: an Introduction, 'Communism, Vital Force of Our Times'; 'The African Revolution'; 'Colonialism of a Special Type'; 'The Forces of Change'; 'The National Democratic Revolution'; and 'Immediate Proposals of the Communist Party'. The text of the Introduction only is printed here.)

Our country, South Africa, is known throughout the world because of its system of White domination, a special form of colonialism which has been carried to extremes under the Nationalist Party policy of apartheid. Nowhere else is national and racial oppression practised so nakedly and shamelessly, with such systematic brutality and disregard of human rights and dignity.

The three million Whites hold a monopoly of political rights and economic opportunities. They alone can vote for and be elected to Parliament and other governing bodies. They are fortified behind a wall of privilege in the civil service, in jobs and professions, in educational opportunities and a hundred other fields. 87 per cent of the land is reserved for White ownership, and White capitalists own and control the mines, factories and banks and most of commerce. Their government inculcates a lying and insulting doctrine of race superiority.

The eleven million Africans, two-thirds of the population, suffer ruthless national oppression. They have been robbed of their ancestral lands. The thirteen per cent of land set aside for African occupation – the so-called Reserves, or 'homelands' – are grossly overcrowded and the soil exhausted. Hunger and the network of pass laws and special taxes drive Africans to work in mines, industries and farms, where they are terribly exploited and under-paid. African languages are despised and undeveloped. The growth of national cultures is stifled. Africans are doomed from birth to little or no education, to the status of 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'.

The other non-White groups – one and a half million Coloured

people and a half million South African Indians – are but little better off. Indeed the advantages they once enjoyed over Africans are one by one being removed. They have no vote or say in making the laws. Apartheid means gross national oppression for all non-Whites.

This system of race domination and oppression has its origins far back in South African history. However, it has developed into its present, extreme form with the development of capitalism and especially of the great diamond and gold-mining monopolies. Capitalism everywhere cultivates and plays upon race and national antagonisms. These are to the advantage of the capitalists because they are a weapon in the competition between capitalists of different nationalities, and because they are a means of dividing and weakening the working class. In the highest, imperialist phase of capitalism the West European monopoly capitalists developed vicious racial theories to justify their subjection of African, Asian and Latin American peoples to colonial slavery. The South African and foreign monopoly capitalists and large-scale landowners, who, together, are the real rulers of this country, have cultivated racial differences and prejudices as their most effective instrument in their insatiable drive for cheap labour and high profits. The colonial status of the African people facilitates the maximum exploitation of their labour. The privileges extended to White business-men, farmers, professional people and workers are a means of maintaining their support for the ruling capitalist class and for the South African colonialist system.

Since 1948 the Nationalist Party government has intensified this system to an unendurable degree at the very time when racialist and colonialist theories and practices have been discredited and condemned throughout the world, and when hundreds of millions of people of Africa and Asia have gained independence and self-government. To maintain this system the Nationalists rely more and more on suppress-ion, force and violence. Almost every channel of legal protest is closed. The main organs of people's resistance have been driven underground. South Africa is being turned into an armed camp. The State moves increasingly towards the pattern of fascism: an open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary and racialist section of capitalists

One of the first attacks of the Nationalist government on the people's rights was the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. The Communist Party of South Africa which for twenty-eight years had marched at the head of the freedom struggles of the workers and oppressed peoples, was outlawed. The Act laid down heavy penalties for defending or advocating Communist ideas. It was no accident that the Nationalist Government made this Party and these ideas their first target, and sought to destroy them as the main obstacle to their plan of subjugating the people. Communism stands for the direct opposite of the theories and practices of the Nationalist

Party. Communism stands for the rights of the workers and oppressed people – against all forms of racialism, privilege, colonialism and exploitation of man. Communism stands for peace, freedom, democracy and national independence.

Laws and force cannot destroy the ideas of Communism, of Marxism-Leninism, because these ideas are true and answer the needs and aspirations of the people. They correctly explain the world we live in and show mankind the way forward to a better world: a world without wars and racialism, without poverty and exploitation.

In this Programme, the South African Communist Party states its fundamental principles. It surveys the vast changes which are transforming the world and the continent we live in. It analyses the historical roots and the underlying realities of South African society. It puts forward its answers to the problems facing the people of our country today.

As its immediate and foremost task, the South African Communist Party works for a united front of national liberation. It strives to unite all sections and classes of oppressed and democratic people for a national democratic revolution to destroy White domination. The main content of this Revolution will be the national liberation of the African people. Carried to its fulfilment, this revolution will at the same time put an end to every sort of race discrimination and privilege. The revolution will restore the land and the wealth of the country to the people, and guarantee democracy, freedom and equality of rights, and opportunities to all. The Communist Party has no interests separate from those of the working people. The Communists are sons and daughters of the people, and share with them the over-riding necessity to put an end to the suffering and humiliation of apartheid. The destruction of colonialism and the winning of national freedom is the essential condition and the key for future advance to the supreme aim of the Communist Party: the establishment of a socialist South Africa, laying the foundation of a classless, communist society.

(The African Communist, No. 12, First Quarter 1963.*)*

XII

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAY OUT

(Statement by the Central Committee, SACP, adopted in Feburary 1963)

Things are coming to a head in South Africa. We are very fast coming to a big crisis in our history. The Nationalist government is tightening the screws and driving apartheid and oppression to the limits of the people's endurance. The people are fighting back. As, one after another, the Government stops legal and peaceful channels of protest and resistance the oppressed masses are turning to methods that are illegal and non-peaceful. They are looking to illegal organisations like the African National Congress and the Communist Party for leadership and liberation. Violent outbreaks of one sort or another are becoming more and more common. Sometimes, as in the case of the operations of Umkonto We Sizwe, these outbreaks are purposeful, effective and carefully planned on a nation-wide level. But very often, as hunger, persecution and police terror drive one section of the people after another to desperation, we find unplanned, spontaneous acts of resistance and retaliation taking place on a local level, and the development of bodies like 'Poqo' with its outlook of blind revenge on Whites.

Former leaders of the break-away Pan-Africanist Congress now living in exile, such as P. Leballo in his recent notorious Maseru speech, have attempted to claim the 'Poqo' movement as a part of their organisation. This claim is made for the purpose of boosting the fallen prestige of PAC, which no longer exists as an organised force in South Africa itself. It does not bear serious examination. PAC may well have given rise to Poqo, by spreading the concept that spontaneous outbursts of people's violence are a suitable means of struggle, and by whipping up anti-white chauvinism amongst African patriots. But having produced the atmosphere in which Poqo has grown, neither PAC nor anyone else can claim to control or to lead it. For Poqo is, in essence, an uncontrolled and violent reaction to oppression, not an organised political movement with an ideology and long term policy accepted by all its adherents. Outbreaks ascribed to Poqo, such as those at Paarl and the Bashee River, were not planned by PAC or any other national organisation: they were semi-spontaneous reactions of men oppressed beyond endurance, inspired to action by rudimentary political aims of the Poqo movement.

Leballo's wild claims of '150,000 members' preparing for 'imminent revolution' which were designed to terrify ill-informed whites, have provided the Nationalist government with the very pretext they have been seeking with which to justify new extreme measures of repression and militarisation. Irresponsible PAC talk has been grist to the Nationalist government's mill.

The reaction of the Nationalist Government is two-fold. On the one hand it steps up and makes harsher its innumerable acts of tyranny and oppression. On the other it is openly preparing to crush by force the resistance and rebellion which these acts must inevitably call forth.

There is no freedom of criticism, of organisation, of speech and meetings, of the press. Every spark that still remains after fifteen years of Nationalist rule is vigorously stamped out. The army and the police force are being rapidly expanded and merged with one another. A drive is being made to panic the entire White population and enrol all its adult members into some sort or other of police and military part-time units. A wild and lying propaganda is spread in which every sort of opposition or protest to the Nationalists – ranging from spontaneous 'poqo'-type outbreaks, to the dignified protests of the Liberals and the Black Sash – are labelled as 'Communism' and subjected to savage penalties. Leaders or former leaders of national liberation, trade union and other democratic movements are subjected without trial or charge to house-arrests and a wide variety of other administrative penalties, prohibitions and bans.

Verwoerd and Vorster are steadily turning the country into an armed camp: ruled by decree and martial law. They are heading for civil war.

Without doubt these ruthless measures of the ruling class, born of panic and desperation, have taken a heavy toll of all who, in the past, have had the courage to stand up publicly for the people's rights. They have greatly narrowed any hope of a peaceful change to a free South Africa. They have succeeded in intimidating some opponents of the Nationalists and causing them to waver in their faith in the victory of the people over the oppressors.

But the great mass of our people, particularly the African workers and peasants, are not intimidated. They are determined to win their freedom, whatever it may cost. And they know that freedom will be won. The White minority dictatorship cannot last. Whether it is looked at in relation to the rest of Africa and the outside world, or in relation to the balance of long-term forces in South Africa itself, the position of the Verwoerd government is hopeless.

South Africa and the World

For a number of years the African National Congress and its allies have conducted a sustained and tireless campaign to expose the facts

about apartheid to the outside world and to call for solidarity with the freedom struggle of the South African people. An important milestone in this campaign was the decision taken by the last General Assembly, by a majority of more than two-thirds, requesting member-states to boycott and isolate the Verwoerd regime in view of its persistent and shameless violations of the UN Charter. The Security Council was also asked to consider the expulsion of South Africa.

The Nationalist government makes light of these weighty decisions and claims they will never be put into effect. They are relying on the big financial interests in the imperialist countries with heavy stakes in South Africa. But, in the long run, these interests cannot prevail over the anger and indignation felt by the vast Afro-Asian, socialist and democratic majority of mankind against the outrages of this Nazi white supremacy regime.

It is true that, as yet, the General Assembly resolution, the Afro-Asian resolutions on the boycott of South Africa and other important decisions have not been treated with proper respect by all states and governments. Even countries which supported these decisions, including some African, Asian and socialist countries, have themselves failed to carry them out consistently.

However, it would be wrong to think that because of these failings the decisions themselves are "unworkable" or cannot be made effective. The same pressures which led to the decisions being taken will, sooner or later, lead to fully practical steps to carry them into effect. In one field after another, whether in diplomacy, commerce, sport or culture, world opinion is challenging South African apartheid and inflicting defeat on this hateful concept. The movement for solidarity with the people of our country is a sustained and protracted campaign. In this campaign the decision of the General Assembly marks an historic turning point from which further great advances can and will be made.

Looked at from the viewpoint of the historical process, the South African regime is steadily and swiftly being driven into a position of isolation, in which the armaments, capital, and other forms of material and moral support which sustain it from abroad will one after another be cut short.

The Balance of Forces Within

Even more important, inside South Africa itself – in spite of the massive-appearing and ever-growing state machine of domination and repression – the balance of forces is steadily changing in favour of the people and their liberation forces, and against the oppressing minority.

A minority, however heavily armed, cannot prevail over the great majority of the people when the majority is organised, determined and clear in its purpose. Every new act of tyranny and oppression

by the government calls forth acts of revolutionary protest and resistance by the masses. Often such acts may be unplanned, desperate and unsuccessful. They may be answered by heavy and costly reprisals. But in the process the forces of liberation are being forged. They are becoming more steeled in their determination. They are building effective and indestructible organisations. They are achieving ever greater clarity of purpose and direction.

The violent clashes which have occurred in the Cape and elsewhere are signs of the growing revolutionary upheaval in our country. The so-called 'Poqo' operations are a reaction against unendurable oppression, and one cannot doubt the courage and patriotic feelings of those who took part in such actions as the storming of police stations. But at the same time many of these acts show negative and even harmful features. Planned badly, or not at all, they have the nature of spontaneous outbursts: acts of desperation, not acts of responsible and thoughtful revolutionaries. They reflect grave political backwardness, their only basis often being a crude, terroristic policy of hitting back and indiscriminate reprisals against the white community. Such a policy is far removed from the outlook of the advanced elements of the African people, as it has been formed in the course of a long experience of struggle for national liberation headed by the African National Congress, the trade unions and the Communist Party. At the same time, these acts of desperate retaliation have a positive side, although they cannot succeed in their objectives and although they involve heavy reprisals, setbacks and temporary defeats.

For from these defeats the people are drawing the conclusion, not that resistance is futile, but that it should be planned, purposeful and principled. The leaders of the African liberation movement have not merely taken a negative or critical attitude towards the 'Poqo' type outbreaks. They have acknowledged that exclusively non-violent methods are no longer of use. Indeed it is notable that at the recent Moshi Afro-Asian Conference in Tanganyika, a spokesman of the African National Congress publicly announced support for and Congress connection with the fighting organisation, Umkonto We Sizwe.

Such statements, and the increasing activities of Umkonto itself, show that the African people and their leaders are rapidly absorbing the lessons of the abortive 'Poqo' outbreaks: that they understand the duty of experienced and responsible leaders. They do not in any way seek to dampen or discourage the revolutionary spirit abroad among the youth, the workers and peasants and the oppressed people generally. Instead they aim to harness that spirit, not to reckless adventures, but to effective, planned action. Only such a dynamic and militant policy can avoid the repitition of fruitless acts of violence, instigated by desperate organisations of the 'Poqo' type, or even provoked by the authorities, and involving unnecessary bloodshed, reprisals and setbacks.

Another important lesson which the oppressed people are fast learning from the present crucial phase of our history is that every attempt to redress or rectify a local or partial grievance is necessarily connected with, and can only be won by, the defeat of the Nationalist government itself, and the ending of White minority rule. Where every protest and every demand is met merely by bloody suppression by the state, it becomes clear to one section of the people after another that the state itself is the obstacle to any sort of advance, and that no sort of happy or tolerable future is possible without the removal of this tyrannical state and its replacement by one which embodies the will of the majority of the people.

Does this mean that it is useless to campaign on any sort of local issue or partial grievance, and that the time has come to forget about such immediate questions and speak only in general terms of freedom? No: that would be wrong: such a conclusion could only be reached by parlour-politicians who live in isolation from the people and their daily needs and problems. Real liberation leaders who are close to and part of the masses cannot escape their duty to take part in their everyday struggles for higher wages, against pass laws, group areas and mass evictions, against Bantu Authorities and Bantustans, whether these struggles are on a local or a national scale.

But it does mean that in future every local struggle will more and more tend to broaden out into a nation-wide struggle. It means that where the state and its police and military attempt to suppress strikes and demonstrations by force and violence the people are more and more going to be organised and prepared to defend themselves and strike back. It means that each campaign on a specific issue, whether it be the crucial struggle against the Government's newest 'Bantu' laws: the workers' demand for a living wage: the peasants' struggle for land and against Bantustans will inevitably develop into a struggle for state power, for the right of the people of our country to govern the country according to the principle 'One man, one vote'.

The best guarantee of the speedy victory of the South African revolution is that the seasoned and devoted leaders of the most representative and influential liberation organisation, the African National Congress, have grasped the essentials of this situation and courageously advanced a correct policy. It is now their historic task and responsibility – despite all the difficulties and dangers of work under illegal conditions and Nationalist terror – to convey this policy to the people and organise them in action to carry it out. In this hard task the ANC can count, as in the past, on the unqualified support of our Party and all its members.

It is within the general framework of this outline that certain specific and critical problems should now be considered.

The Pass Laws – A New Round of Struggle

The pass laws have always been a weapon in the hands of the white colonialist state to oppress and exploit the African people. But the government is now intensifying and worsening the pass system in a way which changes its character. Pass laws have become much more than a source of constant irritation and humiliation, leading to summary arrests, raids and fines. In the Western Cape the pass laws are being used to evict Africans forcibly from the entire area and to return them to starvation in the Reserves. The government openly states that its aim is to close the entire Western Cape to Africans. And this is just a beginning. It is the intention to follow out the same aim, area by area, throughout the country. It is for this purpose that the pass laws have been extended to apply to African women, more and more of whom are being endorsed out of urban areas. The latest 'Bantu' legislation recently introduced in parliament makes the aim clear. It is to turn all Africans into 'foreigners' in the 'white' areas – that is the main urban and industrial centres of South Africa. Here, Africans are to be deprived of all rights of residence, labour and family life. All Africans are to be turned into migrant labourers, forced by hunger from the crowded, starving Bantustans to temporary jobs under compound and contract conditions in 'White South Africa'.

The working of this policy has already led to the desperation and bitterness of the Africans in the Western Cape. It will do so everywhere. The fight against pass laws is not a 'Western Cape' issue alone. It is a basis for nation-wide political action and resistance. In present conditions this cannot be just a repetition of previous anti-pass campaigns aimed at the curtailment or abolition of pass laws. Today the fight against pass laws has become a fight for the right to live and work in that 87 per cent of our country which is arrogantly claimed as 'White South Africa'. It is a fight against deportation to Bantustans and the seizure of the rest of the country. It is a fight for citizenship, for land and freedom.

Events are forcing the people into struggle against the pass laws. They cannot do other than resist. But unless the people see this resistance as a whole, as an inseparable part of the general struggle of the oppressed people for freedom, serious mistakes may be made. Even though conditions are desperate, responsible leaders cannot merely follow the policies of desperate and impatient men who grow reckless and clamour for any sort of action regardless of the consequences. Serious revolutionaries cannot engage in desperate adventures without thought to the future.

The new round of struggles against the pass laws poses most acute problems for the people and their leaders; but all these problems can be overcome if they act in a way that is both militant and principled, without yielding to desperation tactics or opportunistic concessions to backward elements.

Consider the position where, faced with intolerable pressures by the application of the pass laws, the African people of some area decide upon mass pass burning followed by a local general strike. Clearly, if they are ready for such action, militant leaders cannot and should not restrain the people. It would be wrong and in present conditions unrealistic to tell them to wait for some future 'national day of action' which may never materialise. Action must be taken on local initiative when and where the masses are ready to respond: their action will inspire the people elsewhere and draw them into action too.

But one cannot overlook that any action anywhere is almost certain to be answered by savage reprisals from the government, the police and the military. Unless alternative proposals are adopted and prepared for, such reprisals could lead to blind rioting and to indiscriminate, 'Poqo'-style attacks on white civilians and property. But such an outcome cannot be regarded with approval or favour by African patriots dedicated to the cause of freedom. Riots and pogroms can only lead to massive state retaliation, a serious political set-back for our cause and its prestige at home and abroad and a crushing defeat of the people. Freedom fighters must not flirt with such ideas or remain cowardly silent in the face of them. That way lies disaster for our people and the cause of South African freedom.

Revolutionaries fight against and oppose such ideas and tactics, not because they are violent, but because they are wrong: because they are unprincipled because they aim only to produce terror for the sake of terror. The people of this country will not be roused to struggle by such actions, which hold out no prospect of the overthrow of the state of oppression but only prospects of wide-scale blood-letting. Instead the people will be driven into inactivity.

The answer to government terror is not wild rioting, but organised and planned mass self-defence and resistance. Police and military violence against peaceful pass-burners or strikers cannot succeed if the brave and disciplined young freedom-fighters are organised and prepared to stand up in defence of the homes, the lives and the security of their own people.

Today in many parts of the country, government policy is driving people into resistance to a stage where they are clamouring for action. Local leaders cannot lag behind the people, or they will cease to be leaders and the blind forces of destruction and revenge will take over. But local action must always be principled, in accordance with the established policy and general direction of the national leadership. No desperation: no adventurism: but firm, resolute and revolutionary action! That should be the watchword of the oppressed people and their leaders in the difficult days ahead. That is the policy of the Communist Party.

The Fight for Wages

How can we live, how can we keep our families, on the miserable wages we are paid? To the millions of low-paid workers, especially the Africans, in the factories, shops and other businesses in the towns, no question is more pressing than this.

Everybody, even many employers' associations, agree that Africans are paid far too little. Yet hardly anything – for most workers nothing at all – is done to raise the wages. The result is terrible poverty. Whole families live close to starvation. The worker cannot manage to feed his family, to buy clothing, to pay for rent, transport, taxes, school fees and all the other expenses out of his wages. His wife is forced to go out to work and neglect the children, and still there is not enough. Often the neglected and hungry children turn to crime. Always there is trouble with the police. Always the answer is the same – *we have no money.*

Why are African wages so low, when Europeans get far more pay often for doing much less work? African workers are seriously considering this question – and finding the correct answer. It is not that they are less capable and efficient workers: it is that they are discriminated against on racial grounds. Their trade unions are not recognised: their strikes are illegal. Even when certain employers would be prepared to negotiate with the workers they are stopped from doing so out of fear of the government.

Why are the government and the White boss class so determined to keep African wages at starvation level, to stop any big and important increases anywhere? It is because the whole economic structure of the country, the phoney 'prosperity' of the country, the big profits for White local and foreign capitalists, all rest on the foundation of cheap, sweated African labour. And this twisted economic structure is the foundation of the twisted political and social superstructure of South Africa, of apartheid and all the vicious anti-African practices of the government.

That is why it is impossible to look at the wage demands of the African workers from a purely economic and trade union point of view. Every strike of African workers, even in one factory, is immediately looked at as a political and a police matter. The government and the bosses and the mine owners and the farmers are very keenly aware that a real big jump up in wages for one group of workers, even in one trade or industry, will inspire the millions of underpaid workers elsewhere, in industry, in commerce, on the mines, on the farms, to demand and fight for more money for themselves, too.

The workers are very well aware of this as well. That is why it is so rare to see a strike of workers, these days, in one factory or one industry. It is not that they do not have plenty of reason for striking: it is because they know that if one group of workers come out on

strike on their own, all the forces of the state and the police will be brought in to hammer them, to arrest them, to victimise and deport them.

That is why, when African workers think or talk about striking for higher wages, it is in terms of a general strike for general demands rather than the traditional trade union pattern of each section fighting piecemeal for its particular demands in each particular industry or trade. And this is a sound and healthy approach: for although conditions may differ in detail from one industry to another, *all* African workers in general are subjected to colonial-type exploitation on the same miserable general standard of pay. To meet this situation what is needed is the greatest possible united action of the majority of the working class.

This does not of course mean that the workers and their trade union leaders should not undertake strikes and other actions, whether legal or illegal, in a single industry or even a single factory. Where the need arises and the workers understand and are prepared for the consequences, they will take industrial action. And they will be correct to do so, for a single victory, even a small one, in a single strike, may be enough to spark off and inspire a whole series of similar actions among other workers, a process which the authorities may be unable to subdue.

What it does mean is that in the present period the advanced section of the workers should take a forward and militant line of policy in the fight for a living wage. They should inspire the workers with confidence in their own strength and unity. They should strive to broaden out every militant struggle for higher wages with a view to including every category of workers in regional and national general strikes.

Finally, they must aim to see that the workers are made fully aware of the political aspect of their fight for decent wages, conditions and opportunities of work. Fundamentally the fight of the African worker for a living wage is part and parcel of his struggle for citizenship and trade union rights. To win this fight it is necessary to destroy White minority rule and establish a state of national democracy.

The fight of the urban workers for more wages is part of, and merges with, the fight of the whole people for the right to live and work in this country, the fight for land and freedom, the fight to win the national democratic revolution. The workers are not and cannot be separate from this great movement: in fact, they are its heart and soul and its natural leader.

Rural Areas and 'Bantustans'

The rural areas are no longer the placid backwaters of the country. They are becoming storm centres. The government itself is attempting

to enforce its unacceptable policies against the resistance of the people. At the same time it is evicting militant men and women into the country areas from the towns, on a large scale. Both these attacks are having the effect of raising the tempo of revolutionary struggle in the countryside.

Especially in the Transkei and Zululand the government's attempt to force through its Bantustan schemes, have brought about an explosive situation. Some areas are already close to civil war. The issue is becoming very sharp and clear. The issue is not what sort of Bantustan constitution should be adopted, it is whether the people will accept any type of 'Regional self-rule' which means a surrender of their rights to citizenship within South Africa as a whole. More and more people are understanding that there is no liberation by way of accepting Verwoerd's mess of pottage, by way of separating the Transkei or any other area from the rest of the country. The only way is that of struggle for the overthrow of white minority rule and the liberation of South Africa, our country.

Events are proving the correctness of the policy and decisions of our last National Conference, which, despite campaigns by others for a more 'democratic' or 'genuine' Transkeian constitution, demanded the total rejection of Transkeian separation and called for unity in struggle of the whole country for total liberation.

The liberation movement encourages and assists the rural people in their struggles, and helps to prepare and train their most revolutionary people for action. But here again, ill-planned adventures can and should be avoided. Blended with the patriotic and revolutionary spirit of the rural people we are increasingly seeing the effect of that knowledge of organisation and experience of tactics, stragegy and planning which has been gained in many years of political struggle in the towns. The African National Congress itself is turning more strongly than ever to the countryside. It is building new ANC branches and strengthening existing ones. The aim is not to displace such popular and respected traditional leaders as Sabata Dalindyebo, or to put forward Congress members as competitors for local leadership and authority, but to assist the local people and to unite the radical and anti-government forces in successful local action. Even though many traditional leaders may not share the Congress outlook, their resistance to the government is leading along the same road – a direct challenge to white supremacy and its eventual overthrow by the people.

The struggles of rural people against local oppression and on a local basis cannot by itself bring about the collapse of the Bantu Authorities system. For this, what is needed is a united nation-wide fight by the people of the country and the towns together, to overthrow white supremacy. But these local struggles are a starting point which can ignite the South African revolution. They inspire the country and show that the powerful giant of apartheid can be resisted and

checked, where men are ready, organised and united, and where they fight back. Today the Nationalist government has a great advantage in arms and the organised state machine. But the people are stronger in numbers and conviction in the rightness of their cause. In the course of struggle they will gain also the organisation that is necessary for victory.

The government and its running dogs, like Kaiser Matanzima, who aspires to the sorry role of the Tshombe of the Transkei, is inflicting a reign of terror to make the people submit. They have for three years maintained a 'State of Emergency' in the Transkei. They have kept hundreds of people in jail without charge or trial. Their 'homeguards' assault African patriots, rape women, kill, burn down huts, turn farmers off their lands to starve. They are armed and backed by white police and military.

But history teaches us – and Transkei patriots are proving it again – that neither terror nor force of arms can subdue the spirit of an awakened people. The Mountain Committees and the Xhosa fighting tradition is reconquering the Transkei from the invaders: and as has happened before, those without arms will learn how to obtain and to use the weapons they need for freedom.

The Communist Party is basically an organisation of urban workers. But it is a fundamental principle of our policy to build the closest ties of friendship between the workers and the peasants. Especially in a country like ours, where such close links already exist between the Africans in the towns and their brothers in the platteland, it is the duty of every member of our party to assist the rural people in their bitter struggles and to show in practice that the staunchest ally of the peasant masses is the industrial working class of South Africa. Our workers must strengthen their personal ties with the countryside: they must work with the greatest sympathy, tact and patience, not to divide the rural people but to unite all patriotic forces among them for the overthrow of minority rule and ownership, and the transfer of the land and the government of the whole of South Africa to the whole of the people.

'Organisation decides Everything'

It is a usual tactic of fascists and other reactionaries to present a terrifying and completely distorted picture of 'Communism', and then to label and smear all critics, all advocates of change, as 'Communists'. The Nationalist Party are expert students of Hitler and McCarthy in these tactics. The African National Congress in particular has been made the victim of these smearing methods.

In its press and radio propaganda, the Nationalist Party paints an absurd picture, that the Communist Party has 'captured' the African National Congress and other liberation organisations, that it 'controls'

these movements and decides their policy for them. This propaganda, which is aided by people like the PAC and certain leaders of the Liberal Party, flies in the face of truth and commonsense. The Communist Party has no desire to 'control' or dominate any other organisation, and it is ridiculous to imagine that the leaders of the ANC and its allies, who daily face persecution and even death to maintain the existence and independence of their organisations, would tamely submit to dictation from our Party or anyone else.

Certainly there is a large area of agreement between the Communist Party and the ANC on policy and strategy. But this is certainly not because either organisation controls the other: it is because like the ANC, we of the SACP, as stated in our Programme, regard as our 'immediate and foremost task' a united front of national liberation to destroy white domination and achieve a national democratic revolution, whose 'main content . . . will be the national liberation of the African people'. It is not remarkable that the policy of our Party should coincide with the aims and aspirations of the majority of the people and their organisations – indeed this is a tribute to the correctness of Marxist-Leninist theory and its application by our Party to the realities of the South African situation.

Our political policy is correct: it can be understood and accepted by the national liberation movement and the masses of the people. But it is not enough for the leaders to have a correct policy. It is necessary that an adequate machinery must exist to convey this policy to the people and to enable them to carry it out effectively. That is exactly what is missing in the present situation in this country. It is true that the smashing attacks of the government have crippled and made almost impossible the means of propaganda and organisation which have been used in the past. The Nationalists are out to smash all organisations that oppose white domination, to stop their leaders from speaking, writing or meeting one another, to victimise, jail and exile them. Every day some new blanket or individual ban is announced, issued by the Minister of Justice. But all these handicaps can be overcome by careful and intelligent organisation that recognises that new conditions need new methods and approaches. Failure to take necessary organisational steps would lead to a dangerous gap opening between the people and their leaders.

The period when it was possible to organise wide-scale open and lawful activity for freedom is nearing its end. It is still possible to find new organisational and propaganda methods to carry on the fight. But the methods which served so well in the past are no longer good enough. Most of the work of the liberation and democratic movements is unlawful. Whatever chances remain for carrying out legal mass work of education and organisation must be used to the full. But such chances have become so limited that they form only a minor side of the work that has to be done. The freedom movement

has been forced into the position where illegal work is the major side of its activity. All ideas on organisation must now be reconsidered. The main job of the movement is to make its illegal work more effective, more efficient and more successful in reaching the masses of the people and evading repressive action by the authorities.

With the struggle rising in intensity, the most vicious punishments are being meted out to everyone who is known or even suspected to be involved in underground activity. Points of law and court procedures are thrown to the winds, as the state and the judges put the preservation of white supremacy before every consideration of justice, fair play and the legal tradition. In these conditions, carelessness and recklessness become serious crimes against the people.

Our Party

A tremendous responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the *South African Communist Party.* In the strengthening and the leadership of our organisation rests the key to victory. Our Party is the most experienced and seasoned in underground work. It is guided by and imbued with the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism which has been proved time and again to be the only correct revolutionary ideology.

Our Party can only fulfil the great tasks which now face it if it is greatly increased in membership, effectiveness and in the understanding and self-sacrificing work of each individual member.

Our inspiring new Programme – South Africa's Road to Freedom – provides us with an invaluable tool to raise the political level of our membership and to attract and enrol many new members. It must be made the basis of a vigorous and dynamic campaign of education both within the Party itself and amongst revolutionary workers and intellectuals who have not yet joined our ranks.

We do not want and never have wanted to enrol members into the Party who are not ready for it or who are likely to prove unstable or unreliable. But the time has come when we must discard the conservative approach which regards any worker who has not yet fully absorbed the teachings or perhaps merely the vocabulary of Communism as 'not ready' or 'unsuitable'. Thousands of people are today able to absorb the straightforward message of our Programme and are ready to fight and die for it. It is imperative that we find a way to reach these people and draw them into our ranks.

To do all these things properly it will be necessary for all our members not only to give their time and their devoted work to the Party, but also to help raise more money and to make the fullest personal financial sacrifices that they can. At a time when every revolutionary is facing imprisonment or even death, there is no sacrifice from which we can shrink.

As a result of the present 'state of siege' mentality of the ruling classes, and the massive resources being devoted to 'security', to police activities, terror, intimidation and surveillance of known Leftists, the work of our Party, spearhead of the advanced working class, becomes far more difficult and dangerous. To meet the dangers we need to be filled with unshakeable courage and confidence in our Party, our class, our people and our cause. We have every reason for confidence.

Forward to Victory!

Events in South Africa are moving towards a crisis, culminating in a direct clash, between the forces of reaction, apartheid and barbarism organised by the state, and the forces of liberation.

As the struggle grows more acute, the bravest and most resolute men and women will come forward to lead the people in the path of struggle and victory. The people will organise and fight back on every front – against pass laws, Bantustans and group areas, against starvation wages, against mass evictions, against police state terrorism. They will take bold local initiative against grievances: merging every local and partial struggle into a mighty river of people's insurrection that will sweep away minority baaskap and win people's rule in a free South Africa!

The Nationalist government cannot succeed in its attempts to check the awakened people of our country in their irresistible drive to freedom: they can only succeed in making that struggle more bitter and bloody. Should they persist in this course, the only effect can be that the present outbreaks of sabotage and violence will develop into full-scale civil war, beginning with guerilla operations in various parts of the countryside and culminating in an armed insurrection of the whole oppressed people throughout the country.

It is not the Communists and it is not the oppressed non-White majority who have chosen this path: it is the ruling classes, the Nationalist Party, backed up and encouraged by the United Party, and the big capitalist interests. They are out to keep big profits, stolen land and White privileges, even at the cost of a continuous reign of terror that turns our whole country into one big concentration camp, even at the cost of many innocent lives, both non-White and White.

There is only one way out of the misery and bloodshed of Nationalist rule and White domination – the revolutionary way out. Our people will never submit to terror and intimidation; they will unite, organise and prepare to fight back. Death and sacrifices cannot deter patriots who are determined to win freedom; who have decided that it is no longer possible to live like slaves and be treated worse than dogs.

Down with the Verwoerd Government of starvation, tyranny and death!
Down with apartheid and partition of South Africa!
Forward to a united, free South Africa: the whole country for the whole people!
Unite for Land, Freedom and the Right to Live!

(The African Communist, No. 13, Second Quarter 1963.*)*

XIII

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

By J. B. Marks

(Text of the speech by J. B. Marks – the final contribution from any Party present – delivered as Chairman of the SACP and leader of the South African delegation at the international meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 16 June, 1969.)

Dear Comrades,

To this great and historic Conference we bring greetings to our brother Parties from the Communists of South Africa, from all revolutionaries of our country – in the gruesome jails of the fascist Vorster regime; working in perilous underground conditions; or participating in the armed struggle which is now raging in Southern Africa.

As the main draft document before this meeting points out the struggle for the liberation of our region is one

'of great importance for the future of Africa and world peace'.

The world is well aware that the racist leaders of the so-called white minority in South Africa have turned our beautiful and wealthy country into a hell for the great majority of our people, especially for the indigenous Africans who comprise most of the population. Our land has been forcibly usurped; our people turned into a landless, rightless proletariat, the object of fierce and unrestrained exploitation and oppression.

What is perhaps not so fully realised is that the present day Republic of South Africa is an imperialist state itself. It has seized the former mandate of Namibia (South West Africa) and exploits it as its colony. It is the main partner in the Unholy Alliance with Rhodesia and Portugal, who, together, retain a vast area of our continent as one of the last refuges of open and unashamed colonialism. It openly threatens the sovereignty and independence of Zambia and Tanzania – and, ultimately, of every African state.

Against these terrorist, racist regimes the masses of people of our countries have learnt, through many years of bitter experience, there is no way to emancipation except that of revolutionary armed struggle. We did not reach this conclusion as a result of any preconceived notions regarding methods of struggle, any so-called universally-valid dogma. Indeed we fully agree that it is for the revolutionaries of every country to evolve their own methods, according to their own circumstances, of attaining our common goal: the conquest of power for the masses of working people. But in our conditions of total suppression of the people's rights, of constant, daily terror and force exercised against the masses, with tens of thousands of patriots in detention and massacres a commonplace, with the great majority of the people in a state of seething revolt against enslavement and intolerable affronts to their human dignity, there could be no other way forward.

Indeed, comrades, a war has already begun and is in progress for the liberation of Southern Africa. In Mocambique, in Angola, in Guinea-Bissau, in Namibia and even in the Republic of South Africa itself, fighting has broken out. Brave African guerillas are dealing heavy blows at the fascist and racist regimes. Behind the lines the workers of town and countryside are increasingly defying the fascist terror and raising the banner of resistance. Inevitably the struggle will spread and merge into a single people's war which can only end in the destruction of white minority rule and the establishment of people's power. We shall win!

In Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) since August 1967, numerous armed clashes have taken place between the 'security forces' of the notorious Smith regime and guerilla units made up of joint forces of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the African National Congress (ANC) – the mass liberation movement of our country, the Republic of South Africa. These two organisations have concluded a military alliance which is an outstanding and inspiring example of true fraternal unity in action.

It is no secret that the Smith regime relies heavily on massive military and economic aid from the fascist Republic in the South. In fact with the complicity of Britain and its Labour government the Republic of South Africa has sent troops into Rhodesia on a large scale since the outbreak of guerilla activities. Recently the South African Minister of Police, Muller, admitted in the all-white Parliament that the Republic had sent further reinforcements of armed and specially-trained police to fight in Zimbabwe, on the border of free Zambia. It cannot be doubted that, but for this aid, the Smith regime would by now have been overthrown, and that it now stands in the same relation to the fascist Republic as does the puppet regime in South Vietnam to the United States.

This armed struggle enjoys the fullest support of our Party. I should like here at this great meeting to inform you that members of your

South African brother Party are fighting in the front lines, side by side with our non-Communist comrades. Their courage and devotion have proved worthy of the highest traditions of our movement; many have laid down their lives in the struggle to liberate our country.

Comrades,

We South African revolutionaries are deeply conscious of the international significance of our struggle.

Behind the vicious and disgraceful regimes of Vorster, Smith and Caetano stand the sinister powers of NATO and Japan, of world imperialism. It is no exaggeration to say that, but for this backing – financial, military, political – our people would long ago have won their freedom.

To the imperialists, South Africa is a treasure-chest for the accumulation of super-profits from the fruits of our rich mineral and other natural resources and from the merciless exploitation of African labour power.

It is also a stronghold of reaction and colonialism in Africa and a strategic key-point in the global strategy of the imperialists. It is a hot-bed for the breeding of the disgusting theories of racism and neo-nazism. Under the successive Premierships of Verwoerd and Vorster, men who openly espoused the cause and ideas of Hitler during the war, the Republic of South Africa became the refuge of nazi war-criminals and a haven for their capital which was endangered after the collapse of the 'Third Reich'. Ever closer relationships, economic and political, are being forged with the neo-nazis of Bonn. West German imperialism is establishing a firm foothold in our country, challenging the well-entrenched interests of British, US and other well-established investors in the race to extract maximum profits, and concluding secret and sinister agreements regarding the production of fissionable uranium, poison gases and other weapons.

Everywhere the South African racists are seen as among the outstanding supporters of international reaction and imperialism. The Israeli aggression of June 1967 helped the Republic of South Africa by forcing the closure of the Suez Canal, to the great profit of Cape Town and other South African ports. The Republic has reciprocated the favour by rendering important practical support to the zionist aggressors.

At the same time we are deeply conscious and appreciative of the powerful support for our people's struggles from innumerable friends of freedom throughout the world. In one sphere after another of international relations, ranging from trade and diplomacy to culture and sport, the door is correctly being slammed in the face of the ignominious racists of South Africa.

The independent states of Africa, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the labour and democratic movements in the capitalist countries, have repeatedly denounced apartheid. They have

demanded that South Africa implement human rights and dignity. They have demanded the release of Mandela, Sisulu, Kathrada, Mbeki, Fischer and innumerable other heroes of our people now serving life imprisonment and other heavy sentences under atrocious conditions in the fascist jails.

Above all they have rendered and are rendering valuable practical support to our freedom-fighters: money, food, clothing, medicines, assistance in military training and – most precious – arms. We take this opportunity, comrades, in the presence of the leaders of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Mongolia, Cuba and other socialist countries, to say that our people will never forget the warm comradely solidarity they have shown in providing us with the means for our emancipation.

Many of our brother Parties here represented have carried out many solidarity actions with our people, or taken part in broad anti-apartheid movements in their countries. To all those Parties – those of Britain and other West European and Scandinavian countries, of India and other Asian countries, of North and South America – may we express our deep gratitude; our confidence that they will redouble their efforts in the stormy period now facing our struggle; our hope that all here will follow their example.

The very nature of our struggle has taught our revolutionaries, Communists and non-Communists alike, the fundamental lessons of *internationalism*. We know full well from practical experience that our struggle against imperialism is one with that of our brothers fighting the same enemy in every country of the world.

We are at one with the fighting people of Vietnam. Their implacable and victorious fight against the biggest imperialist power is a shining example, a glorious inspiration, to all the oppressed and exploited of the earth.

We are at one with the brother Arab peoples to our North, in their determined resistance to imperialist-backed zionist aggression, for the recovery of their lands and the assertion of their rights to self-determination.

We rejoice at every advance of our comrades everywhere. We hail the important step towards people's power in which a big part has been played by the Marxist-Leninist vanguard: the Sudanese Communist Party. We hail every step in the social, economic and ideological progress and cohesion of our class brothers, our close and trusted allies, the leaders and the people of the socialist community.

Our struggle also is not only for our own liberation. It is at the same time our contribution to the common fight, a fulfilment of our internationalist duty.

That is exactly why for a number of years we of the South African Communist Party have been consistently and vigorously appealing for unity within the ranks of the international communist movement,

vanguard detachment of the world anti-imperialist forces. Unity of our movement is the key to the rallying of all who fight imperialism, war, colonialism and exploitation. Our Party enthusiastically welcomed the convocation of this conference; we have to the best of our ability contributed to its preparation.

Rarely, if ever, has an international gathering been prepared with such thoroughness, such patience, as this great and historic conference. We should like at this stage to express our very sincere appreciation of the tireless efforts of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party – indeed of all whose labours over the past fifteen months have cleared the way to the achievement of this wonderful reunion of nearly all the main contingents of our great movement.

We must recognise, comrades, that this has been no easy task. We are all well aware that a number of differences of perspective and interpretation have developed between various parties. We hope very much that in the course of time, of comradely discussion, and above all, the test of practice, these differences will be resolved. That is a task which still confronts us.

But, during the arduous preparations for this conference, most of us have come to realise that this long-term process could not and must not impede us in the most urgent and imperative duty which history has placed before us. That task is to concentrate at this stage not upon our temporary differences, but upon the immeasurably greater and more important area of our agreement; upon our pressing need to present a common front to the common enemy.

We are faced with a ruthless, vicious and dangerous enemy: imperialism. The enemy, as well defined and described in the main document placed before us by the Preparatory Committee, is ceaselessly plotting acts of intervention and subversion against socialist and other non-imperialist countries, acts of provocation and outright lawless aggression. Against patriots, revolutionaries, working class militants everywhere it wreaks savage reprisals and murder. It constantly menaces the world with the horrors of atomic, chemical and bacterial war which only our combined actions and vigilance holds at bay.

This enemy will not pause in its onslaught on our forces and allies while we engage our energies in protracted debates.

Therefore it became imperatively incumbent upon us to unite our ranks, and to agree on how to rally all anti-imperialist forces. We had to leave aside for the time being those issues where we differ. History demanded of us that we concentrate on the wide area of common agreement; that we restate our common tasks in contemporary terms in a manner capable of mobilising our whole movement and its allies.

That task has been brilliantly accomplished by our Preparatory Committee and the documents it has placed before this conference.

Comrades, our Central Committee fully supports these documents.

Our delegation has been entrusted and empowered, on behalf of our Party, to sign these documents and to pledge our Party's strength and resources to mobilise the working people of South Africa for their translation into reality.

We warmly express our agreement with those constructive speeches which have elaborated and elucidated these documents – speeches such as those of Comrades Brezhnev, Gomulka and Hall – and we feel that to explain exactly why we concur with the contents of the main document, the peace appeal, the documents on the preparation of the Lenin centenary and the demand for the ending of imperialist aggression in Vietnam – would merely be to repeat what others have said most ably.

We have listened carefully also to the addresses of those comrades who expressed differences with the documents, particularly the main document.

Frankly, comrades, we find some of their arguments rather difficult to understand. For example, some comrades have gone into lengthy criticisms of the document, not because of what it says but because of what it does not say. One would logically, perhaps, then expect them to propose some additional material. But surprisingly enough they are recommending that we delete whole sections amounting in some cases to three-quarters of the whole.

We are also surprised at the type of subject-matter which some of these comrades are saying the document lacks. More than one delegation here has drawn attention to the events in Czechoslovakia, despite the well-grounded appeal of our Czechoslovakian comrades not to make their country's problems, at this complex stage, the subject of international debate.

These comrades must be well aware that their special and rather strange point of view on this question is far from receiving general support in our Communist movement. And this is true of nearly all the other questions which a few parties insist are so essential to the documents that their omission makes it unacceptable; even though there is nothing actually in the document which we cannot all subscribe to. But these comrades know that their special view on these questions is one which this conference cannot and will not accept; they have repeatedly enjoyed and they have made full use of the opportunity to advance these views throughout the preparatory stages of this conference. The amendments they proposed which found general support were accepted and are included in the draft. The others were omitted, and properly so.

Surely, comrades, that was precisely what we set out to do in preparing this conference and its documents. It was clear to all of us that there were some matters on which we could not all reach agreement now. Therefore we decided to devote ourselves to the priority question of formulating our agreement on the urgent tasks

of the present stage of the anti-imperialist fight. This is precisely the measure of our achievement in drawing up this wide-ranging Marxist-Leninist document which is before us; which draws the statement of our immediate tasks out of the analysis of the current situation.

Of course, each Party makes its own assessment of events at home and abroad. We could never hope to draw up a single document which would succeed in combining all the viewpoints of all the Parties. From our point of view, for example, we feel that a rather disproportionately large amount of attention has been devoted to the problems of Europe. We and other people actually engaged in anti-colonialist struggles would surely consider it over-optimistic to imagine the Social-Democrats as partners in an anti-imperialist fighting front; we have fresh memories of the betrayal of the French Socialist Party over Algeria; the abject sell-out of the British Labour Party over Zimbabwe; the role of the West German Social Democrats as part of the Bonn imperialist policy of alliance with fascist South Africa.

But we realise that this is a collective document of the movement as a whole, and we fully accept it and support it as such. We are totally opposed to any procedure of allegedly "improving" it by means of amputating its members or mutilating it.

Comrades, our delegation would like, here, to say a word about the so-called principle of unanimity. It is true that unanimity is a goal towards which we must ever strive. But it would be absurd to elevate this into an absolute principle. We may not like to talk of 'majorities' and 'minorities' in a gathering such as this. But we are not lawyers and we are not a debating society; we are a gathering of practical revolutionaries engaged in a life-and-death struggle whose outcome will decide the future of mankind. We dare not allow ourselves to be placed in a position where a few Parties, or even a single Party can be given a power of veto which would, in effect condemn our movement to paralysis. We appeal to all our comrades here, to their Central Committees, to participate in endorsing this unity-building document. If they will not do it now, immediately, we trust that they will consider their position soon after we have concluded our deliberations and associate themselves. But if nearly all our Parties want to sign this document now they must be free to do so.

Dear Comrades, we are well aware that we have not come here to engage in polemics with the rather puerile 'ideological' propositions advanced by the Maoist group. We have no intention of doing so. But when it comes to the external activities of the Chinese government which impinge on our struggle against imperialism, which so far from advancing that struggle positively impede it and are in practice aiding and abetting the enemy, this is something we cannot afford to ignore. Our Party vigorously condemns the border provocations committed against the Soviet Union, the citadel of socialism and mainstay of the anti-imperialist forces everywhere. We were deeply impressed by the

speech of the West German Communist Party delegate, when he gave such striking evidence of collusion between the Maoists and the Bonn imperialists.

For a number of years we have seen the sidetracking and disruption of various international solidarity organisations by Chinese delegations who persisted in dragging into gatherings of non-Communists their alleged 'ideological' campaign against the CPSU and the world communist movement. At one time the People's Republic of China rendered valuable assistance to the African National Congress, the fighting national liberation movement of our country. But for several years, and without reason or explanation, this aid has been withdrawn; instead we find the Maoists subsidising and actually preserving from complete collapse a group of right-wing renegades from our struggle whom documentary evidence now proves to have been started at the instance, and with the support, of the CIA.

Our movement has not, and should not, shut the door to any Communist Party. We have invited the Communist Party of China to every meeting at every stage of the convocation and preparation of this conference. They have refused even to accept our invitations; they have accused the Communists of all the world of being 'revisionists' and 'renegades'. The world may judge to whom those descriptions more fittingly apply.

Comrades, it is fitting indeed that our notable meeting takes place on the eve of the centenary of the birth of that great genius of our movement, founder of the Soviet State and leader of the oppressed and working people the world over – Lenin the Liberator. We must congratulate the initiators and the drafters of the fine address on this occasion which has been placed before us.

We believe that our meeting has been worthy of this momentous occasion, that it will go down as a turning point from which we shall go forward in greater unity than ever to rally our own forces and all fighters against imperialism, for fresh advances, fresh victories for the cause of human liberation.

Comrades, we are a part of the great army of Communists; the greatest army of freedom this earth has ever known. We uphold a glorious and noble cause whose ultimate, world-wide victory is assured. Not one of our Parties here represented is without its heroes and martyrs of the working class struggle. In the name of these honoured dead, comrades, of all we have fought so hard and so long to attain, here in this city whose very name is an inspiration to every revolutionary, let us rededicate ourselves now to our historic mission – the downfall of imperialism, war, oppression and the exploitation of man by man; the triumph of peace, national freedom, democracy and socialism, all over the world!

International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969. (Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague 1969.)

XIV

FREEDOM CAN BE WON

A Call to the South African People

(From the Augmented Meeting of the Central Committee of the SACP. The Call was circulated illegally in the country and reproduced in the Party's quarterly journal.)

How can we, the oppressed working people of South Africa, free our country from white minority domination and win power for the people? This is the main question that faces us all. This was the main question that was discussed by the historic 1970 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Our people have many serious problems and grievances.

Every non-white in South Africa knows the daily insults and hardships of life in our country.

We are not allowed to vote, not allowed to move freely, told we are "inferior". Racialist lies are even taught to our children under "Bantu education".

People are heartlessly sent away like cattle to "resettlement areas".

Every African knows well the problem of the *pass laws* which send a million to prison every year, and subject every man and woman to brutal terror by the police.

There is the burning problem of *land* – nearly 90 per cent of the land is in the hands of whites, while Africans starve in the reserves or work for next to nothing as farm-labourers.

The black worker faces an impossible task of trying to live on starvation *wages*; he is denied the chance of a skilled job and has no trade union rights, while prices, fares, rents go up all the time.

The *Coloured* and *Indian* people are also the victims of apartheid, of Group Areas, Job Reservation and other vicious and cruel laws.

All these grievances and many others are well known to us. We talk about them all the time. But in our hearts we know also that we will never be rid of these evils until we get rid of the *main* problem – white minority rule.

There is a Way!

The government and the system it upholds can be overthrown. The

whole of world history teaches us that unjust minority governments cannot last. Over the past twenty years alone, practically the whole of Asia and Africa have seen the people winning their right to their own governments.

Freedom can and will be won in South Africa as well.

But we must not deceive ourselves. Our freedom will not drop from the skies. Nor will it be brought to us from outside South Africa. We have hundreds and millions of friends all over the world who want to see South Africa restored to the people of this country. But not all their resolutions and protests will help us *unless and until the people of our country stand up and fight for themselves.*

How are we to do this?

We must study and understand the situation in our country and its place in the world.

We must organise and unite our forces.

We must be resolved to resist, defy and oppose oppression in every form and in every way.

We must be armed and ready to fight – if need be to die – for our freedom.

Understanding the World

The first step to changing the world is understanding it.

Our struggle for freedom in South Africa is not an isolated one. It is part of a world-wide conflict that is going on. On the one side are the forces of socialism, of national liberation and of peace. On the other are the forces of imperialism, of exploitation and of war.

It is this conflict which will decide the future of South Africa and of all men and women everywhere.

We need to understand this conflict because above all we need to understand who are our friends and who are our enemies.

We must look at people's deeds as well as their words!

The imperialist governments, like those of the United States, Britain, France and West Germany, pretend to be opponents of apartheid. But what do they do about it in practice? They help the Vorster regime in every way they dare to: with money, with trade, with arms. Indeed they are partners in the oppression and exploitation of our people. Look around you at all the British, American, West German and French businesses and factories in our country. They are doing very well out of apartheid, because it means low wages and big profits for their capitalists.

That is why they sabotage every United Nations decision for the boycott of South Africa. To appease world opinion, especially in African and Asian countries, they say they are against apartheid. But who can believe them?

Imperialism

The United States of America claims to be in favour of equality and peace. But for years now they have been carrying on the most cruel and murderous war to subdue the people of Vietnam. Their treatment of the black people in their own country is a disgrace.

The United States, Britain, West Germany and France are *imperialist* countries, controlled by huge capitalist monopolies. These monopolies are only interested in increasing their huge profits, by dominating other nations, by investing abroad to exploit cheap raw materials and labour, by aggression and war.

Imperialism is the enemy of all humanity.

It is the friend of reaction and racialism everywhere; the friend of neo-Nazi Vorster South Africa. South African imperialism is a part of and closely tied up with world imperialism.

The imperialists invented the lie of racialism to justify their enslavement and robbery of most of the world's peoples. They preach that some races are 'better' than others, and that therefore it is all right for two-thirds of the people of the world to live miserable and short lives, deprived of enough food, clothes and shelter, without land, education for their children, security or leisure.

The capitalists find these ideas very useful. Here in South Africa we have seen how racialism has degraded and deformed the white workers. Instead of fighting the bosses, they join with them in oppressing their black fellow-workers, and think only of keeping the African out of a skilled job.

Imperialism – monopoly capitalism – is the enemy of all the people's aspirations for peace and happiness. Above all they hate and fear socialism which will put an end forever to the exploitation of man by man and to every form of racial and colour discrimination.

The World Fight Against Imperialism

When we just look at our own country, it seems that there is nothing but a bitter and endless struggle between us and the oppressors; that they have the backing of the big powers like the United States, Britain, France and Germany.

But this is not the whole picture. We, the oppressed peoples of South Africa, have our friends and allies as well. They are hundreds and millions of working people, people who want peace and freedom, who want national freedom, a better life and socialism. Our common enemy is imperialism.

The people of Vietnam are under savage attack by a powerful and ruthless enemy: United States imperialism, which year after year has been trying by fire and terror and starvation, in which hundreds of thousands have been murdered by Yankee troops, napalm and other

weapons, to force them to submit. But the Vietnamese did not submit and never will submit. They value freedom more than life itself. That is why they cannot be defeated. Their example is an inspiration to us. They are our friends and comrades in arms, and their victories are our victories.

Our fellow-Africans in Egypt have for several years now been under violent attack by the Zionists of Israel, who are armed and incited by US imperialism to do their dirty work in North Africa and the Middle East. But – given generous and powerful assistance by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries – the Egyptian people will not submit to having half of their country occupied. They are fighting back for freedom and independence. They too are our friends and allies.

Our Neighbours

Nearest and closest to us are our fellow-Africans in the border countries and further north.

There are the people of *Namibia* – South West Africa.

We all know that this huge country has been unlawfully seized by the government of South Africa. They have taken the best farmlands and handed them over to white farmers. They have laid their hands on the rich mineral deposits, including diamonds and uranium, and sold them to big foreign monopolies. They are forcing the indigenous peoples to undergo the indignity and terror of apartheid.

The brother-peoples of Namibia are not submitting. They are organising and fighting back. They are not waiting for the United Nations which passes fine resolutions – but can do nothing because the US, Britain, France and other imperialist countries sabotage these resolutions. The Namibians are organising for armed struggle for their freedom.

We South Africans support them one hundred per cent. We demand that Vorster and his government quit Namibia. We demand independence and self-government for its people. They are our kinsfolk and brothers; we have the same fight against the same enemy – South African imperialism.

The people of *Zimbabwe* (Rhodesia) are not submitting. The British Government claims that Rhodesia is its colony and that Smith is a rebel. But in practice they have done nothing to put down this phoney 'rebellion'. They talk about sanctions – but everybody knows that South Africa is defying the so-called sanctions and sending the Smith regime everything it needs.

The Zimbabwe people, our brothers and sisters, are not waiting for Britain and the United Nations to free them; they have learnt that the only way to freedom is to fight for it.

The revolution in Zimbabwe has already begun. It probably would

have been won already, except for the support of South African arms, troops and policemen.

Our armed guerillas of Umkhonto we Sizwe have already gone through the fires of battle in Zimbabwe. At Wankie and in other battlefields, together with the fighting men of ZAPU they faced the Smith and Vorster forces and inflicted heavy casualties on them. This is a common fight against a common enemy. This is the beginning of a war for the whole of Southern Africa. It will be a long and bitter war. But in the end we shall win. From each battle we gain experience; for each dead African patriot many more will join to take his place.

Portuguese Colonies

White South African storm troopers do not only intervene in Zimbabwe. In *Mocambique* and in *Angola* they are supporting the Portuguese colonialists in their cruel and long war against the people of Angola and Mocambique.

These colonies, together with Guinea-Bissau, are the last areas of direct European rule left in Africa.

Portugal is one of the poorest and smallest countries in Europe. How does it manage to keep on this bitter and costly war to hang on to its colonies?

Mainly because it is supported by the imperialist countries with whom it is associated in NATO (North American Treaty Organisation) – America, West Germany, Britain, France and others. They help the Portuguese fascists with arms and money to try and keep their slave regimes in Africa.

The White Government of the Republic knows that the people's victories over Portuguese colonialism are dangerous to its rule here. They are afraid of free African governments on our borders. They help Portugal with weapons, money and even White soldiers from the Republic.

But in spite of his friends and allies, Caetano, the Portuguese dictator, is losing his colonial wars in Africa.

Thousands of square miles and hundreds of thousands of people have already been liberated in these territories. The liberation movements do not only fight and defeat the Portuguese soldiers; they are already ruling in many regions and provinces where the Portuguese soldiers do not dare to go. In these areas the people are building a new life, they have taken over the land and the government.

The people of these countries, the brave soldiers of their liberation armies, led by the FRELIMO of Mocambique, the MPLA of Angola and the PAIGC of Guinea, are our close allies and comrades-in-arms.

It is our duty to help them as much as we can. Their victories are ours as well.

African States

We are not living in the Africa of the fifties, where the whole map of the continent was painted in different colours to show British, French and other 'possessions' of European countries.

There are now forty independent African states, governed by African Presidents, Prime Ministers, governments and parliaments.

Of course these countries are not all in the same position. Some are big and developing quickly. Many others are small and having been so long misgoverned by foreigners – poor and undeveloped.

Take our neighbours – Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. For many years these countries were governed by Britain which was not at all interested in developing them, in building modern agriculture and industries to give jobs to the Basotho, Swazi and Batswana. They were more interested in keeping these countries backward so that their men would be forced to work in the South African gold mines, where rich Englishmen have many millions of pounds invested.

Today although they are independent in name, they are dominated by their big, bullying neighbour, the Republic of South Africa, where black men are regarded as inferiors, provided by God to work for the white baas.

But the people of these countries have one thing in common. They hate apartheid – they know it all too well, from first hand experience. They will fight to the last man against incorporation by the Republic. When the people of Lesotho had a chance to vote they turned their backs on Vorster's pal Leabua Jonathan. Sir Seretse Khama, President of Botswana, is building a road to join up with Zambia, so that his country will not be so dependent economically on the Republic. And in spite of the bullying threats of Vorster, who is trying to stop it, Botswana is going ahead with that road.

When it comes to the showdown we know that the whole population of these countries are on our side. They can never be free or independent while white supremacy rules in Pretoria – and they know it.

Up North

The people of all the independent states of Africa hate apartheid and white domination in South Africa.

The only African state which openly supports or has dealings with the Pretoria clique is that of Dr Banda in Malawi. Everybody knows that this little tinpot dictator is bribed by the Rand millionaires. Even his own people do not agree with him. They know all too well the hardships and ruthlessness of white domination in our country. Hundreds of thousands of them have come and still come to work on the mines – they know what it is like.

Most free African states have taken a firm stand against white minority rule.

Naturally the whole idea and practice of 'white superiority' is deeply offensive to African nations who have, in the past few years, managed to throw off foreign domination and are determined to show their people and the world that Africans can govern themselves far better than any other nations could govern them. Apartheid is intolerable to any self-respecting African patriot.

The people of African states are deeply concerned with the sufferings and indignities of their brothers and sisters in Southern Africa. They long to see the ending of white domination south of the Zambesi and Limpopo rivers. But this is not the only reason why they are greatly concerned with events in our country.

A Threat to Africa

What has independence meant to the countries of Africa? Many people are disappointed because they have not made more rapid progress over the past ten years. It is true that many African states have failed to follow up formal independence by truly breaking free from colonialism. The West European and United States capitalists still have a dominating influence in their economic life – they own their banks, mines, and big businesses.

Many of the better-off sections of the Africans – shopkeepers, big farmers and some members of governments – care little for the lot of the masses on the land. They care only to enrich themselves, and are prepared to become partners with the imperialists in exploiting their fellow-countrymen. Imperialism still has a powerful footing in most African countries. It uses its influence to hold back progress. It bribes and intrigues and backs up reactionary coups and anti-African elements.

But no African wants to go back to the dark days of colonialism.

The people of these countries have gained their independence after many years of injustice, backwardness and humiliation under foreign rule. They do not wish to lose these things now. They must aim at strengthening their independence, developing the wealth of the country to get higher standards of living, and ensuring that their people enjoy a good education, health and security. Most of them want to march forward to a free, socialist Africa.

The fascist Republic of South Africa and its imperialist allies threaten all these goals. They are against socialism and want to strengthen capitalism. South African imperialism wants to extend its power northwards. They want to lay their hands on the treasures of all Africa, to return the continent to the hell of colonialism, to keep all Africans poor, backward, objects of cheap labour as they are in the Republic itself.

No African state that values its independence can ignore this danger. The Republic has a more highly developed industry (developed largely by African labour!) a bigger and better equipped army, a more powerful state machine than any state South of the Sahara.

Already the Republic is using its big military build-up in the stolen territory, the Caprivi Strip of Namibia, to make bullying threats against Botswana and Zambia. It is using the satellite Banda to make threats and territorial claims against Tanzania and Zambia.

There are many reasons why all African countries should unite. But even if there were no reason, they are urgently called on to unite against the threat of aggression from the South.

The African states are beginning more clearly to recognise this threat. They are calling upon the United Nations to bring in stronger steps to stop the imperialist countries selling arms to South Africa. Many of them have threatened to leave the British Commonwealth if the Conservatives resume the sale of arms to South Africa.

They are right to do so. Each African state has a solemn duty to its people and its neighbours to be on guard against South African penetration and aggression; to build up its security and defences, to give positive and increasing aid to South African freedom fighters.

We South Africans also have a duty. We must build up our own strength and resistance, and prepare for revolution. We must solemnly warn the white fascist government that any step against an African state, whether it be little Lesotho, or Zambia or Tanzania, will not be tolerated by the people of South Africa.

The Rest of the World

It is not only the African states which are deeply concerned with the future of our country. The whole of Asia is concerned.

The ideology and practice of apartheid are an intolerable insult to all dark-skinned persons, whether in Africa, Asia or the Americas. It is intolerable to the great and proud nation of India, 500 million strong, and to the People's Republic of China, with 700 million people, that hundreds of thousands of men and women born and bred in South Africa are deprived of every human right merely because their forefathers came from their countries.

Apartheid is an outrage to the labour, democratic and Christian principles in Western Europe and North America. Even though their governments and their rich capitalist investors find it profitable to do business with apartheid and help Vorster with money and weapons, the masses of ordinary working people in these countries do not agree with these practices.

That is why, one by one, white South African teams are being thrown out of every international sporting contest, whether it is the Olympic Games or a cricket tour of England.

That is why next year, 1971, has been set aside by the United Nations General Assembly as a year of protest against racialism everywhere – with the spotlight on apartheid South Africa, the worst example of the lot.

That is why in Britain, France and many other countries a storm of protest is gathering against the supply of arms to Vorster, against emigration of skilled white workers to the Republic to take the bread out of the mouths of our dark skinned workers who are fully capable of being trained to do these jobs.

While we are considering this question, we must also turn our attention to the world Communist movement, and to the hundreds of millions of people – one third of the human race – who live in countries governed by Communist Parties.

What About Communism?

The Nationalist Party and its government is most afraid of Communism. They have passed all sorts of laws to 'stop' the ideas of Communism being known and to punish those who uphold these ideas.

They say that Communism is a very bad thing and a danger to the country.

The very fact that these things are said by Vorster and his government makes it hard for any sensible person to believe them. For these men are notorious and habitual liars. They tell the world that apartheid is a good thing, that the "Bantu" are very happy here, that South Africa is a democratic country. Everybody knows this is all lies. How can apartheid be good, when it leads to untold suffering and humiliation for all dark-skinned people? How can Africans be "happy" when their land is stolen, when they are confined to menial and dangerous jobs at starvation wages, when they have no vote or say in the laws of the land? Why should we believe these liars when they say that Communism is bad? Rather we would think that if Communism is bad for Vorster and his racialist government and his bullying police thugs, it must be good for us!

Let us look at the facts.

We know that very many of the South African Communists are in prison today, not for committing any crimes but because they spoke out and stood up for the rights of the people, against pass laws and Bantu education, for land, votes and freedom for all.

We know that Soviet Russia and other countries governed by Communists have always demanded the rights of Africans, condemned apartheid, and in deeds as well as words supported and armed our freedom fighters.

In Britain, France, America and all over the world it is the Communists who are the strongest supporters of the Anti-apartheid movements, fighting for boycotts of the Nationalist government and

all-white sports teams, opposing the sale of arms and other forms of support for white domination in South Africa, Namibia (South West Africa) and Rhodesia.

The Communists everywhere fight against apartheid and every other sort of racialist ideas and practices because the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin are so hated and feared by the white racialists of Southern Africa. That is why, in every part of the world from Vietnam in the East to Cuba in the Americas, from Egypt to South Africa, the Communists are the foremost in opposing imperialism and colonialism.

The Socialist Way of Life

The Communists are the foremost fighters for a new way of life – socialism. The way we live now is called capitalism. The workers are at the mercy of a few rich men who own the mines, the factories, the land and other means of production. The bosses make them work as much as possible for as little money as possible. In most countries the workers (in South Africa this does not of course apply to Africans) are allowed to form trade unions which help to get better pay and conditions. But even then, the higher wages are quickly swallowed up by higher prices!

The bosses get rich out of the labour of the workers. This is what we call exploitation. Their profits are really unpaid labour; because the amount we get in wages only covers a small part of the time we work.

The only way to stop this state of semi-slavery is to put an end to private ownership of the means of production. No man should own the factories, mines, banks and so on. They should belong to everybody. That is what we mean by socialism.

This idea is easy for Africans, in particular, to understand. For generations the main means of production in Africa – the land – was not owned privately. The land did not belong to the Chief: it belonged to the people as a whole.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and other great men saw that it was not only terribly unjust but also wasteful and harmful to allow a handful of rich parasites to run the business of the country. They pointed out that they did not only run the businesses, but also because of their power and the money they were able to run the state as well, and to decide big questions that should be decided by the people: questions of peace or war; questions of making the laws under which people have to live.

Today it has been proved, in the Soviet Union and many other European countries, in China and other Asian countries, in Cuba, an American country, that the ideas of Marx and Lenin are not only just and human, but also that socialism works better than capitalism. Today one human being out of every three lives in a socialist society

where there are no extremes of poverty and wealth, where there is no unemployment or illiteracy, where every boy and girl has an equal chance to get a good education and enter any trade, profession or occupation.

Socialism is good for the people – the workers and poor people on the land; for the teachers and other professional people; for nearly everybody. But of course it is very bad for the rich who want to live in idleness on other people's work. They will lose their power and their privileges, and have to work for their living like everyone else. That is why they hate socialism, and its foremost advocates, the Communists. That is why they tell lies about these things. As they own the newspapers and the radio stations and other means of information, they can spread their lies widely, and many people believe them. But you cannot deceive the people forever.

Look at South Africa today.

If you would believe the newspapers and the radio you would think that we live in a very rich and happy land.

But we who live in it know that it is a land of suffering and starvation. It can only be ruled by force and terror. It is a land where there are more prisoners in jail per head of the population than any other. More than half of all the people who were executed in the world last year were killed in our country. Yet ours is only a small fraction of the world population. That is your 'happy South Africa'.

Prosperity – for Whom?

The fascist government and its friends abroad talk about the "wave of prosperity" in South Africa. Prosperity – for whom?

Certainly it is true that more goods are being produced in this country than ever before. Some people are getting very rich. Fortunes are being made.

The big businessmen, financiers, mine owners and farmers have accumulated great wealth. So have the foreign firms which have invested in this country.

Even the white workers have benefitted from the boom. They have been given a monopoly of skilled jobs, and they use this monopoly to hold out for higher wages.

But the masses of non-whites, above all the Africans, have not benefitted at all from the so-called "prosperity". In many ways their position has steadily got worse and worse. Prices have gone higher and higher, but not wages.

Look at the gold mines. It has been worked out that taking the fall in the value of money (that is, the steady rise of prices) an African miner gets *less* today than he did fifty years ago, in 1911!

The gap between the wages of white workers and those of Africans is getting bigger and bigger. On West Driefontein, the biggest mine in

the country, each white miner averaged R4250 a year; each African R280 – just about one-eighteenth. Taking the country as a whole African income averages R140 per year; whites R2100 – fifteen times as much.

Africans in the big towns are relatively better off than those in the dorps, the platteland and the reserves. Yet even in Johannesburg the City Council is forced to admit that nearly 70 per cent of African families are living below the official 'breadline' of R53. 2 per month.

In other words in the middle of all this so-called "prosperity" our people are starving. It is not prosperity at all. It is merely that more and more profit is being squeezed out of cheap non-white labour.

How can the African workers improve their wages?

We are not allowed to form legal trade unions. The Government has openly said it is out to smash the African trade union movement and bannings and restrictions have forced the SA Congress of Trade Unions – the best trade union movement this country ever had – for the time being to stop organising openly. For every trade union organiser or official is immediately banned or deported.

All strikes are illegal, and we have seen how when the Durban dockers bravely went on strike to get an increase on their miserable pay, thousands of them were deported out of the town.

Still they did strike. And certainly the workers, even under these conditions of illegality, must and will find ways and means to unite and organise to enforce their demands.

More and more Africans have come into urban and factory jobs over the past ten years; today they are the big majority of workers in every industry. They outnumber whites in industry by six to one.

Without African labour the work of the country will come to a stop. That is a weapon which the African worker can and must use to get better pay and conditions of work.

We demand the right to form trade unions openly, like workers everywhere else. Until we win that right we shall organise secretly, because we know that any worker who organises openly will be victimised by the bosses and the police. We shall form committees, working at first in a few factories and then spreading to cover whole industries and the whole country. If we all unite together there is nothing the bosses or the government can do to stop us.

But above all, African workers must realise that we shall never get decent conditions until we do away with the white monopolies of votes, of jobs, of power. A government elected by whites will never give us skilled jobs, decent wages and trade unions rights and recognition. There is only one way, in the end, to win these things: by *revolution*: by fighting for a free South Africa, without colour bars; jobs, land, votes and equality of rights and opportunities.

The aim of the workers, eventually, is socialism. The mines, factories, banks, land and big business must be in the hands of the people. They

must be owned and run by a state in which the majority – the working people of town and country – hold power.

Today, the main task of the working class is to abolish the white monopoly of power, to carry out the national democratic revolution for the liberation of African and other oppressed people.

The workers are not alone in this fight. This revolution serves the interests of all oppressed people, those on the farms and in the reserves, the Africans, the Indians, the Coloured people and even progressive sections among the whites. It fights under the banner of the united front – represented by the African National Congress and its allies, which is supported by the workers' Party – the Communist Party.

But our workers have a special and most important part to play in this fight. They are those who own nothing except their labour power. They have no interest at all in keeping things as they are. Their conditions of work have taught them the lessons of working-together, of discipline and organisation. The whole country – its goods and transport, its daily life – depends on the workers. It is up to them to play a special role in our revolution, to be ever to the fore, the most active and clear-sighted, in helping the people to organise, to resist, to fight back and to win freedom.

Closest to the workers or the towns are the masses in the countryside.

On the Land

Africans living and working on the land – whether as agricultural labourers on white-owned farms, or in the so-called "homelands" – have the hardest and most miserable lot of any people in this country.

From 1948 to 1968 mealie production on "white farms" went up from 30 to 100 million bags. Of course all this work was done by Africans – you hardly see a white man on the farms these days. But the absentee farmer took all the profits, and the pay of the labourer remained as miserable as ever.

What about the reserves? (Bantu homelands, as the Government like to call them, though everyone knows the Africans' homeland is the whole of Africa!)

Here maize and corn production have actually gone down, as a result of overcrowding and lack of land. The people and their cattle as well are literally starving.

What about the jobs the Government promised the people if they accepted their lying Bantu Authorities plan? There are no jobs.

There is no "self-government". The Transkei "Parliament" is just a bad joke. Everyone knows that Matanzima can do nothing without the permission of the Bantu Affairs department. He is just a rubber-stamp for the white Government in Pretoria. The government wants to ensure that the Chiefs are no longer the mouthpieces and leaders

of their people. It wants to make them just B. A. D. officials with black skins – working for "boy's" wages.

What are the people on the platteland going to do about it?

They know today, from bitter experience, that they will get nothing from the white man's Parliament by begging and praying.

The only way is to unite and fight back for land and freedom.

The first step is organisation. On the white farms and in the "Bantustans" the farmworkers must begin to form labourers' unions and other organisations. They must demand better pay and food, more land, more rights.

Of course we know that police spies, informers and stooges are to be found everywhere. That is why the formation of organisations must be careful and skilful.

But what is sure is that once militant organisation begins, the people will respond. They will find their own ways of uniting in each area. What is important is to break the silence of the past ten years. Government terror succeeded for a time in stifling the people's protests. Emergency laws, victimisation and bannings of all known and tried leaders gagged the people. The Government was able to boast that everything is quiet; the people are very happy and contented. But they are not happy or contented. The 1970's are going to show they are angry and militant; ready for revolution.

Unity for Freedom

For very many years the ruling class in South Africa tried hard to divide the forces of the oppressed people of South Africa. They tried to get the Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa, Tswana and other African groups fighting among themselves. They tried to set Africans against Indians and Coloured people.

This policy was defeated, especially during the forties and fifties by the African National Congress, which first of all united all Africans and then formed an alliance with the Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the progressive whites of the Congress of Democrats, and with the non-racial Congress of Trade Unions – a united front against the common enemy: apartheid and white minority rule.

The answer of the police state was to answer reason with force. They banned the ANC and the COD, and they persecuted the other organisations of the Alliance by banning and silencing each of their leaders until these bodies were temporarily silenced.

But what they could not do by force or in any other way was to destroy the spirit of unity in the common struggle which had been built up in so many years of hard work and sacrifice.

The *Coloured* people have refused to follow those stooge leaders who tell them they are merely an appendage of the dominant white group. They are a national group of their own, with strong ties with

the oppressed African majority, the leading force of the coming South African revolution for complete democracy and national liberation for all South Africans. Most Coloured voters boycotted last year's elections for the phoney Coloured Representative Council; most of those who did vote rejected the pro-apartheid stooges. The Coloured people, especially the workers and trade unionists and the revolutionary intellectuals, will find new ways to build organisation and unity, to revive the CPC spirit, and to form close links with their fellow-oppressed non-whites, African and Indian.

The *Indian* people are being hit ever harder by the monstrous Group Areas Act. As a result of this law, Indians have more and more come into the ranks of the working class, and the unemployed. In spite of massive police intimidation, the time has arrived when a new upsurge of militancy is showing itself among the Indian community, whose best elements are reaching out to take up the torch lit by Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker and others, the torch of militancy and unity with the African masses in the common struggle for freedom.

The *women* of our country, especially those subjected to the double burden of oppression as Africans and as women, have always been prominent in the great national liberation struggles in our country. Today, with the extension of passes to African women, and the terrible difficulties of feeding their families at such high prices and on such low incomes, the need for womenfolk to be active and organised is greater than ever before. That is why women must enrol as equals and comrades in our fight for a truly free South Africa.

The *youth* and *students* have shown time and again, especially in the past few years, that they are worthy sons and daughters of the great traditions of our people. Even in the bush colleges, those glorified prisons, under the shadow of bans and expulsions, students have raised the banner of national liberation and freedom, and many white students in the English-speaking universities have had the courage and democratic spirit to demonstrate for the rights of the oppressed majority. We may look with confidence to the youth, the builders of the new, free South Africa, to uphold the aims of our national democratic revolution, enshrined in the Freedom Charter, and to sacrifice and fight, if need be, to die, for the cause of liberation.

The African National Congress

The greatest organisation of the South African democratic revolution is the African National Congress, undisputed leader of the African majority of our population. From 1912 until 1960, when it was banned by the Nationalist Party government, the ANC openly organised the African people to unite and struggle for their rights. Thousands of ANC members have been arrested, some murdered, many tortured and banned. Many of its famous leaders like Nelson Mandela,

Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki are serving life and other long jail sentences, others like Oliver Tambo, J. B. Marks and Moses Kotane have been sent into exile to continue the work from outside the country.

Verwoerd and Vorster hoped that the banning would be the end of the ANC. They boasted the ANC was dead. But every year has seen new trials of ANC leaders. Every year has seen fresh ANC demonstrations, leaflets spread among the people and other forms of activity.

The spirit and the policy of the ANC are known and loved by our people. Its Programme, the Freedom Charter remains the programme of all freedom-loving South Africans. The black-green-gold of Congress, our Congress national anthem Nkosi Sikalel' iAfrika these are things which our people have not forgotten and will never forget.

Although it is banned and illegal, the ANC remains the core and the heart of the liberation movement in South Africa; all over our country Congress people are patiently, though necessarily at this stage secretly working to bring nearer the day of liberation from tyranny.

Fighting with Arms

Everyone knows that patiently for many years the Congress movement tried by peaceful demonstrations, protests and strikes to bring about a change for the better in the lot of the people. They failed for one reason only: every request, every protest was met by the white government with force and violence, by more severe oppression, until in the end, throwing even the pretence of democracy and legality overboard, they banned the ANC and relied entirely on brute force to subject the masses.

Faced with this situation, the liberation movement decided that a force of the oppressed people should be built up to meet violence with violence, a force able to lead the masses in armed struggle for their freedom. That force was named: Umkhonto we Sizwe. It announced its birth with planned acts of sabotage in many centres on Dingane's Day: December 16, 1961.

Plans were made to recruit dedicated young men and send them out of the country for military training. For the first time since the days of the old impis, the Africans of South Africa have a military force at their disposal, armed not with assegais but modern automatic firearms.

Already in alliance with the guerilla fighters of the Zimbabwe African People's Union, the freedom fighters of Umkhonto have met the enemy in the field. They fought with great courage and skill, inflicting heavy casualties on the Smith and Vorster forces.

To build up, train, equip and maintain such a force was a great achievement, carried out under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions.

Of course we have suffered our casualties as well. Brave young sons of Africa fell in the field under enemy attack. At home, thousands have been captured, imprisoned for life like Mandela, or killed like Mini and many another.

But we know that there can be no war without sacrifices and victims. We have resolved to die in battle rather than submit to slavery. That is why the people have started this war of liberation, from which there will be no stepping back. And because we are ready for anything, no matter how long it takes or how heavy the cost, we shall win our freedom.

Let us make no mistake. The present bosses of South Africa are ruthless, greedy and violent. They have shown that they will not give up their evil teachings and practices of racialism by pleas and protests, either from the people of this country, or by the whole world. There is only one language they understand: force. And we shall not force them to accept freedom and democracy until we can prove that we are stronger, better organised and better fighters than they are.

Yes, we have hundreds of millions of friends, all over the world. They are ready to support and help us get rid of white minority rule.

But before they can help us, and in order to enable them to help us, we must first of all learn and begin to FIGHT FOR OURSELVES! No one will come from outside. For twenty years now the United Nations have been passing strong resolutions against apartheid and racialism. The fascist government of the Nationalist Party ignores all of these resolutions; today in 1970 our oppression is harsher than ever before.

People's War

All the oppressed people long for freedom. But some doubt whether it can be won in our lifetime.

They look around them and they see that all the power, all the money, all the weapons are in the hands of whites. Our respected leaders, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Bram Fischer, Ahmed Kathrada, Elias Motsoaledi and many others are in prison. Others have been sent out by their organisations to work in exile. The ANC and the Communist Party are underground, and meetings, demonstrations, people's newspapers have been stopped for many years. Spies and informers help the police trap anyone who dares to protest or speak of freedom.

How can we, a people without arms, subjected to terror by day and by night, hope to fight back and win?

Yes. It is true the enemy is powerful. They have the armoured cars and the tanks, the planes and the command of the roads and the railways.

But there is a way to fight; to beat the enemy. It is the way of people's war.

The Vorster government jails, tortures, exiles and murders our leaders not because it is strong and confident, but because in reality it is weak and afraid. It is afraid of the people over whom it unjustly rules, who form the great majority of South Africans.

We are stronger than the Government because the liberation movement commands the support of the great majority of the people, while it is supported only by the white minority which is not fighting for rights or freedoms but only greed and privilege. The moment they see they are on the losing side they will desert the fascists.

One by one the advantages of the enemy will be overcome.

We have no weapons?

We shall take weapons from the enemy and make our own weapons: petrol bombs, hand grenades, the simple weapons of the freedom fighter.

We have only a handful of trained men at our disposal?

Those few will train thousands. Our skills in the art of war will improve with experience.

We shall not aim to meet his troops head on, that is not the way of the freedom fighter. We shall meet them by the methods of guerilla war: Hit and run.

We shall hit him by surprise, when he least expects it. When he looks for us we shall not be there.

In such a huge country as South Africa, our men will be hard to find. By the time his planes arrive to bomb the guerilla fighters, they will have melted into the countryside. They will have merged into the people, to whom they belong and of whom they are a part.

For the guerilla wears no uniform. His strength is that of the people. Always and everywhere, our freedom fighters are among the masses, voicing their demands and defending them against the enemy, his soldiers and police.

Nothing the enemy does is secret, for everywhere the people are watching him and reporting his movements to the guerillas.

This is not a war that is fought on the battlefields only. It is fought in the factories and on the land.

As the clashes grow in number and size, the workers will refuse to work for the oppressor. They will strike and sabotage his production of weapons and supplies. The people of the countryside will become more militant and courageous. They will take themselves the land for which they hunger, and arm their own freedom fighters to defend it.

The roads will be bombed and the railways destroyed; by the people in the surrounding areas.

As the enemy's lines are extended, his strength will be sapped.

Already white South African troops are being sent to Zimbabwe, to Mocambique, to Angola. They are patrolling our long borders.

The higher rises the tide of struggle the more they will be dispersed; the more our superiority of numbers will assert itself.

This is how it has happened in other areas of people's war: in Vietnam, in Algeria, in Mocambique, Angola and Guinea.

Time and space and numbers are on our side. Justice and the outside world are on our side.

The difficulty is only one: to start.

That is the task that now faces the working people and patriots of South Africa.

The Communist Party Calls on You

Dear Comrades and fellow-South Africans, you who have read this message

You know the Communist Party and its record.

It was founded in July 1921, fifty years ago.

For fifty years our Party has never feared to fight in the front ranks against colour bars and oppression, for better wages, land, a new life of freedom for the people. Hundreds of our best comrades, from Johannes Nkosi to Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and Bram Fischer have given their lives and liberty for the cause of the people.

This Party can never be killed by the enemy.

Today at this critical time, the Communist Party calls on you. It calls on all South Africans who love their country and who love freedom. We call upon the workers and the people in the countryside. We call upon the African people, the Coloured people, the Indians and the democratic elements among the whites.

Let us build up our people's organisations, in town and country, in factories, mines and villages.

Let us unite for the fight to end the shame and suffering of white minority rule headed by the Nazi Nationalist Party.

Let us resolve that the beginning of the seventies will put an end to white South Africa and mark the beginning of People's South Africa, advancing towards socialism.

The armed groups of Umkhonto we Sizwe are ready to enter the fight. But they cannot fight alone.

The people must act!

They must build and support their illegal organisations, the ANC, the trade unions and the Communist Party.

They must act militantly for higher wages, land and freedom.

They must arouse the spirit of resistance and defiance.

They must arm themselves.

The war of national liberation is on and we must fight it to the finish.

Victory or death!

(The African Communist, No. 43, Second Quarter 1970)

XV

FIFTY FIGHTING YEARS

(Statement by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, July, 1971.)

July 30 1921, the date of the foundation of our Party, is an important landmark for the people of our country, and indeed for the international working class movement.

Here was a Party born and baptised in fierce struggle; for South Africa, the source of most of the gold in the capitalist world for the past century, is the arena of most acute imperialist, national and class contradictions and conflicts.

Here, within a single state frontier are to be found modern imperialism, monopoly capitalism, and colonialism of a special type, brutally exercised against the indigenous Africans.

Robbed of their ancestral lands, the majority of the population have been herded into 'reserves' or 'Bantu homelands', urban locations and 'resettlement areas' and forced by starvation and organised terror into an army of proletarians to supply cheap labour to white-owned mines, farms and factories.

Rampant racialism, the theory and practice of 'apartheid', subjects every 'non-white' in South Africa to daily insults and hardships. Eighty-seven per cent of the land is in the hands of the white minority. A million people are jailed every year under the pass laws. The right to vote, like all other citizenship rights, is denied to all who are not white. Skilled jobs and trade union rights are for whites alone. Education and social services are minimal.

With their Communist Party, their trade unions, their African National Congress and all democratic organisations subjected to suppression by the fascist regime, the people have understood that all their problems and grievances can only be solved by the revolutionary overthrow of white minority rule; that only through prolonged and bitter armed struggle can liberation be won.

Their organisation, centred around the African National Congress, are actively organising for, arming and mobilising the people for this struggle. Closely united with the people, inspiring and fighting with them, now as for the past fifty years of struggle and sacrifice, is the Party of the South African working class: the Communist Party.

Even at the time of its foundation, the leaders of the Party – W. H. Andrews, D. I. Jones, S. P. Bunting and others – were already veteran militants of the class struggle. From the outbreak of the first

world war, they adopted a firm internationalist position, denounced the pro-imperialist section of the Labour Party and established the International Socialist League. The ISL made a sharp break from the opportunist and white chauvinist policy of the Labour Party and determinedly set about the industrial organisation and Marxist education of the burgeoning African working class.

From its inception right up to the present day our Party has been closely and indissolubly linked with the bitter struggles of the working people of our country against class and national oppression.

These hard struggles, analysed in the illuminating light of Marxist-Leninist science and with the fraternal assistance of the Communist International transformed the nature of the Party and immeasurably deepened its understanding of its historic role in the complex conditions of South Africa. The Party overcame the heritage of its origins as the left-wing of what was then a predominantly white-immigrant labour movement. Following its historic 1924 Conference, led by S. P. Bunting, the Party made a decisive turn towards the oppressed black masses, recruiting into its ranks outstanding African revolutionaries of the calibre of M. M. Kotane, J. B. Marks, A. Nzula, J. Nkosi, E. T. Mofutsanyana and others.

Following a period of internal struggle in the thirties, during which serious damage was done by a left-sectarian tendency temporarily dominating the leadership, a new Central Committee was elected in 1939 with M. M. Kotane as general secretary.

The following decade was one of the consistent raising of the membership and activity of the Party. It led the fight against fascism at home and abroad, and strove ceaselessly to unite the workers and oppressed people in defence of their rights. The Party strove persistently to strengthen and unite the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the revolutionary trade union movement and other organisations striving for democracy. Through the untiring efforts of Communist and non-Communist patriots within these movements a firm basis was laid for the emergence of the united national front of liberation of our country, the Congress Alliance, and its common programme, the Freedom Charter.

Although, for the first thirty years of its existence, the Party had maintained a status of formal legality its members and leaders had always been subjected to persecution and intimidation by the imperialist rulers of the country. The unforgettable martyr of the African people, Comrade Johannes Nkosi, was brutally done to death by police at a mass demonstration in Durban on 16 December 1930. Few if any members were unfamiliar with the police cells.

Even this period of precarious legality was brought to an end with the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act (1950) outlawing the Party and making the defence of Marxist-Leninist ideas a 'crime' subject to heavy penalties. This vicious law, the forerunner of many

fascist measures by the Nationalist Party government which have transformed South Africa into a police state on the Hitlerite model, met with firm opposition from the oppressed masses. The Party's Central Committee at that time – influenced by legalistic and even liquidationist ideas which had penetrated the Party – was unprepared theoretically and practically for the new situation and decided to dissolve the Party. The great majority of the Communists of South Africa nevertheless threw themselves with dedication and courage into the taxing task of rebuilding, in conditions of illegality and mounting terror, the South African Communist Party, which upholds and continues the great Party tradition of half a century of unremitting struggle in the front ranks of the South African revolution for national liberation and democracy.

Throughout the fifties the Party and its members added new lustre to the glorious principles of Marxism-Leninism by their devotion and sacrifices in the common cause. Communist and non-Communist, revolutionaries of all national groups stood united against the blood-stained racialist regime. In the words of Comrade Abram Fischer:

> '. . . *in the movement for freedom and equal human rights for all . . . it was always members of the Communist Party who seemed prepared, regardless of cost, to sacrifice most, to give of their best, to face the greatest dangers in the struggle . . .*'

The Communists – Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, J. B. Marks and others – were among the first to volunteer and the foremost to lead in the great campaigns of Defiance of Unjust Laws, of national general strikes, of workers', rural peoples', women's and youth struggles which characterised the fifties. They participated in the epic movement for the mass Congress of the People, culminating in the adopting of the Freedom Charter, common programme of the united liberation movement. Revolutionaries of different ideological tendencies participated in the moulding and building of that united movement and its programme, in which an outstanding contribution was made by South Africa's Communists.

The unity of Communist and non-Communist revolutionaries and democrats was welded yet more firmly during the marathon Treason Trial of 1956-61 of 156 men and women of all national groups, charged for their participation in the movement and support for the Charter. Mass support at home and abroad resulted in the freeing of all those accused before the Courts.

The reaction of the fascist government was to discard legal procedures in favour of lawless police terrorism. The African National Congress was declared illegal and every known member or supporter of the liberation movement subjected to systematic persecution.

The militant mass struggles of the fifties, although they stopped

short of violence on the part of the people, shook the ruling classes and the colonialist apartheid structure of South Africa. Unable to continue their rule in the old way, they abandoned all pretences at bourgeois legality and took the road of naked terrorist dictatorship against the oppressed people.

It became clear to the masses and to all honest patriots that no other choice remained between submission to slavery and armed resistance and revolution.

Leaders of the African National Congress and the Communist Party set themselves to recruit and train fighting cadres which entered the field of action on 16 December 1961 with the opening of a campaign of planned sabotage throughout the country. The process was begun of preparing for armed combat.

In 1962 the Party made a major contribution to the South African revolution in its Programme, adopted after intensive discussion among all levels of the membership.

In its explanation of the situation, and above all in its Marxist-Leninist analysis of the problems of the country contained in the 1962 Programme, *The Road to South African Freedom*, the Communist Party provided the revolutionary theory, the application of Marxism-Leninism to the history and structure of the country, essential for the victory of the revolutionary movement.

The Programme definitively describes the special type of colonialism developed in South Africa. It sets forth as the immediate and foremost task of the Party the winning of a united front of national liberation, uniting all sections and classes of oppressed and democratic people for a national democratic revolution. This revolution to destroy white domination, whose main content will be the national liberation of the African people, is seen as the essential condition and the key for the advance to a socialist South Africa, the supreme aim of the Communist Party.

The period of the sixties saw many severe blows struck at the Communist Party, the African National Congress and other organisations demanding democracy and liberation.

Following a raid on the underground Party headquarters at Rivonia a number of the most outstanding revolutionary leaders, both Communists and non-Communists, were arrested and tried on charges of planning to overthrow the state by armed revolutionary struggle. Despite world-wide protests, including a 106-1 vote at the United Nations General Assembly, 8 of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment: Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Mhlaba, Goldberg, Kathrada, Motsoaledi and Mlangeni.

Hundreds of Congressites and Communists were detained without trial, subjected to prolonged torture and some even murdered in the police cells.

The great majority of those detained refused to testify against

their comrades, even to the point of death. But a few were broken by the police, resulting in yet further trials, such as that of Mkwayi, Kitson and others, also resulting in life sentences, the execution of the trade unionists Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba in November 1964, and the rounding up of thousands of Party and Congress supporters, and trade unionists throughout the country.

A further heavy blow was sustained by the Party in 1965 with the arrest and sentence to life imprisonment of Comrade Abram Fischer who had been living in hiding and leading the underground work of the Party at that time.

These heavy blows sustained in these attacks by the powerfully-armed and heavily subsidised secret police machine inflicted grave setbacks on the cadres and organisation of both the Party and the national liberation movement. But they did not, and could not, destroy the confidence and support of the masses of the people for their movements and their leaders and their will to carry on the struggle to victory and freedom.

The Party patiently and determinedly rebuilt its organisation in the country, learning from past errors of overconfidence and under-estimation of the enemy, combining legal with illegal methods, and employing new tactics adapted to the present situation of terrorism.

The past few years have seen one campaign after another of well-executed illegal propaganda campaigns in which leaflets, recorded messages and other forms of propaganda have been broadcast to the masses from both the Party and the African National Congress.

At the same time, cadres sent abroad by the Party and the national liberation movement have sustained and intensified their activities. Cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe, with the fraternal aid of the African, socialist and other states and organisations have been welded into the well-trained and armed nucleus of a mass people's army, spearhead of the South African revolution. In alliance with the Zimbabwe African People's Union, units of Umkhonto we Sizwe have proved their mettle in armed combat with the joint South African and Rhodesian 'security forces'.

In the field of international solidarity the movement has tirelessly worked to bring home the ugly realities of South African racism and fascism on a world scale, to stimulate movements for the boycotting and isolation of the fascist regime in the military, commercial, cultural and all other fields, and to mobilise support for the South African freedom fighters. The movement has built strong ties of solidarity with the fighting patriots of neighbouring countries and the Portuguese colonies. It has won powerful, world-wide support from fellow-Africans in most of the newly-independent states, from the governments of the socialist countries, and from working class and democratic forces in the imperialist countries.

The South African Communist Party has consistently upheld the

cause of proletarian internationalism, of unity within the Communist movement and of common action by all anti-imperialist forces throughout the world. It has consistently upheld the banner raised by the founders of the Party: the banner of revolutionary working class unity, around the October Revolution and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Our Party has actively and positively contributed to the work of preparing for and participating in the historic conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties; it upholds and implements their decisions.

At the same time, especially through the Party journal *The African Communist*, we have done and will continue to do our share in spreading the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism throughout our continent. The Communist Party enters the period of the 1970's with profound confidence in the principles of our Party, tested and vindicated in fifty years of experience, and in the victory of the forces of freedom in our country, of socialism throughout the world.

The 1970 Augmented Central Committee meeting of our Party was an important milestone in its history.

The meeting realistically reviewed the policy and activities of the Central Committee over the period that had elapsed since the 1962 National Conference. Confirming the correctness of the Party's general line it, at the same time, established the broad political, strategic and organisational guidelines for the coming period in the development of the South African revolution.

The meeting pledged unqualified support for the liberation army, Umkhonto we Sizwe in its aims to recruit and train guerilla fighters, to spread the area of guerilla warfare to the heart of the republic.

Expressing its firm belief that 'the building of our Party as the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working class is a vitally important contribution to victory in the common struggle', the meeting instructed the Central Committee to direct its main efforts 'to the reconstruction of the Party at home as an organisation of professional revolutionaries', close to the working masses and able to carry on the Party's work in the face of police terror.

The Augmented Central Committee took steps to strengthen and renew the personnel of the Central Committee, while maintaining continuity and expressing its confidence by re-electing the senior officials, the General Secretary and Chairman of the Party, Comrades Moses M. Kotane and J. B. Marks.

A rousing 'Call to the People of South Africa', issued by the meeting recalled the glorious record of our Party.

For fifty years our Party has never feared to fight in the front ranks against colour bars and oppression, for better wages, land, a new life of freedom for the people. Hundreds of our best comrades, from Johannes Nkosi to Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and Bram Fischer have given their lives and liberty for the cause of the people.

This Party can never be killed by the enemy.

Now, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of our fighting Party, and on behalf of all our members, we solemnly rededicate ourselves to our historic task. In the name of our pioneers who first raised the banner of Communism in Africa; of our comrades who died on the field of battle, on the scaffold and in the prison cells, and those who languish in South Africa's fascist jails, we pledge that we shall never lower our red banner but carry it forward to victory.

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF COMMUNISTS AND NON-COMMUNISTS IN THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FREEDOM FIGHT!

LONG LIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!

LONG LIVE COMMUNISM!

(The African Communist, No. 46, Third Quarter, 1971.)

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